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Each volume edited, with an Introduction, by
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

THE BODLEY HEAD

THE LETTERS OF MRS. THRALE

Piozzi, Mrs. Hester Lynch (Salusbury) 1741-1821

SELECTED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

Whitworth College
Spokane, Wn.

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PREFACE

THE Letters of Mrs. Thrale may be found in :—

(1) *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, to which are added some poems never before printed; published from the original MSS. in her possession by Hester Lynch Piozzi. 1788.

(2) *Piozziana*, or Recollections of the late Mrs. Piozzi, by a Friend [the Rev. Edward Mangin]. 1833.

(3) *The Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*. Edited by her niece, Charlotte Barrett. 1842.

(4) *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale)*. Edited with notes and an introductory account of her Life and Writings by Abraham Hayward, Esq., Q.C. 2 vols., 1861.

(5) *Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Sedgwick Whalley, D.D.* Edited by the Rev. Hill Wickham. 2 vols., 1863.

(6) *Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale*, including Mrs.

Thrale's unpublished Journal of the Welsh Tour made in 1774 and much hitherto unpublished correspondence of the Streatham Coterie. By A. M. Broadley. 1910.

(7) *The Intimate Letters of Hester Piozzi and Penelope Pennington, 1788-1821.* Edited by Oswald G. Knapp. 1914.

I have omitted any selection from the so-called *Love Letters of Mrs. Piozzi, written when she was eighty, to William Augustus Conway*, 1842, because they were obviously tampered with before publication, for sensational effect. Mrs. Thrale's affection and enthusiasm for the young actor were purely maternal and, in fact, shared by her friend Mrs. Pennington. The passages, themselves editorially inflamed, which directly allude to a love affair, were expressions of sympathy with his perfectly healthy attachment for an "amiable, but timid and diffident, fair lady" of his own age; who, however, did not apparently recognise "the value of his love." Mrs. Pennington is quite explicit on the subject, and Mrs. Thrale's own references to Conway in letters to various friends should be themselves sufficient to dispel all hints of infatuation.

R. B. J.

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THE LETTERS OF MRS. THRALE

INTRODUCTION

I

If Mrs. Thrale had never made tea for a literary dictator, her name would have survived only as "one of the Blues"; if she had not married an Italian fiddler, her pre-eminence among "the great" would have been unquestioned and well known.

The jealousy of James Boswell has long obscured the value of her intimate contributions to our knowledge of Dr. Johnson: the storm that burst over poor Piozzi has long discredited her fame.

"If ever I get quiet I shall get happy; and if I get happy I shall have a chance to get wise," she once declared: and circumstances combined with her own temperament to deny her the opportunity she was ever seeking, and always missed. She inherited, from an unstable father, a restless spirit, insatiable curiosity, and a marked fondness for the lavish expenditure of ideas and cash; from a severely practical, but loving mother, a longing and a capacity for devotion, with remarkably shrewd business energy. Her character and life were

always in disorder: because her impulses were mutually irreconcilable; and fate tempted her always to play a part.

Like most rich men in novels who adopt an heiress, her uncle omitted to make his will, and, though her "impossible" father would have protected her from matchmakers, he died "in the first act," and she was left "to conciliate as I could, a husband who was indeed much kinder than I counted on, to a *plain girl*, who had not one attraction in his eyes, and on whom he never had thrown five minutes of his time away, in any interview unwitnessed by company, even till after our wedding-day was done!"

The brewer, indeed, was quite ready to spoil the lady, *in his own way*, as an ornament, without influence, in the home. Her place, he said, "was either in the drawing-room or the bed-chamber. We kept a famous pack of fox-hounds . . . but it was masculine for ladies to ride. We kept the finest table possible . . . but *his* wife was not to *think of the kitchen*. So I never knew what was for dinner till I saw it. . . . From a gay life my mother held me fast. . . . Dr. Johnson once told me that I lived like my husband's kept mistress—shut from the world, its pleasures or its cares."

Of these early years she writes, "I am perpetually bringing or losing babies, both very dreadful

operations to me, and which tear mind and body both in pieces very cruelly. . . . I will learn to be as gaily miserable and as airily discontented as I can."

By her own account, she was thus " driven on literature as her sole resource " ; and it is evident that she read voraciously and remembered almost more than she read. The truth is, that she was stimulated, by such unnatural restraint, to create a personality for herself ; to occupy her mind, and to secure some sort of position in the world—to be conspicuous abroad if insignificant at home.

" I have a great deal more prudence than people suspect me for : they think I act by chance when I am doing nothing in the world unintentionally, and have never, I dare say, in these last fifteen years, uttered a word to husband, or child, or servant, or friend, without being very careful what it should be. What I said I meant to say at the time, and thought it best to say. . . . I do not err from haste or a spirit of rattling, as people think I do . . . *when I rattle, I rattle on purpose.*"

Thrale, fortunately, was fond of food and of conversation ; a connoisseur in both. His idea of luxury was to hear Johnson talk at table ; and he appreciated his wife's wit. She attracted the society he enjoyed ; which—as events proved—he could manage with more discretion than she.

Every biographer has told us that Mrs. Thrale " rouged " ; and the fact is symbolic. She spent her life " making up "—in order to enjoy it. Yet she was not fundamentally insincere : she never unlearned how to love. She was too eagerly alive, too sensitive and emotional, too generously sympathetic, for mere play-acting. She could not, otherwise, have won, and kept, her friends. Still less, having lost them by her determination to " marry again to please herself," could she have won other friends, no less loyal and more devoted. The studied coldness of husband and home explains the startling cynicism she occasionally expressed ; her unconquerable warm-heartedness and high spirits preserved her powers of love and joy to the end ; her brilliance was compounded of contradictions.

Inevitably such a character was liable to be misunderstood ; it may be doubted if she thoroughly knew or understood herself. We should hesitate to speak of " the real " Mrs. Thrale ; though we could never call her artificial.

Her convictions were, in the main, these of her day and generation : a simple piety and conservatism, a hatred of radicals and the French, a sense of duty to convention, a faith in blue blood, and a respect for learning. Though frank in criticizing those who injured or neglected her, she was

very willing to forgive and extravagantly generous to enemies or friends. It was her energy and shrewdness that saved Thrale from bankruptcy, and secured a fair price for what Johnson called " the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice " ; that is, the goodwill of the brewhouse. Though long and often in debt, she ultimately paid twenty shillings in the pound.

Even Boswell cannot actually " take us round to the Club " ; and we must accept the tribute of her contemporaries to Mrs. Thrale's supremacy in conversation. We believe her assurance of never seeking to outshine the " Queen of Blue-Stockings " ; in part because she preferred, and secured, greater variety among her guests, but chiefly because she excelled in attracting the wit Mrs. Montagu chose to exhibit. You attended the Salon to listen to your hostess, you went to Streatham to hear every one was at his best. It is said that her *Letters* and other writings more closely resemble her conversation than any others of that day. They produce, certainly, an atmosphere of repartee ; a colloquialism that provokes comment or reply ; an abruptness in moving on to the next subject, as if they had been taken from dialogue. She gives us a string of tales, a series of puns, appropriate quotations ; and much matter for exercise of wit. We feel, at times, the desire to insert a little " Johnson "

or " Burke " between the paragraphs ; to guess at the " cues " from other speakers.

She was familiar with several literatures, from which memory supplied a store of illustrative detail ; but one can scarcely say she was well read. Her interesting observations and shrewd comments do not reveal thorough knowledge or scholarship, but are derived from quickness of perception, picturesque imagination, and a mind that can reproduce all it absorbs. The pedants derided the " vulgarity " of her style ; and her carelessness is surprising in a century that was careful though scarcely accurate ; but the homely phrasing is often vivid and dramatic, destined to long outlive more sober statements.

II

Hester Lynch Salusbury was born on January 16, 1741, at Bodvel, near Pwllheli, Carnarvonshire, and claimed an illustrious descent from both her parents. John Salusbury, inheriting the estate of Bachygraig, Flintshire, had married his cousin Hester Maria, a sister of Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton ; but was never able to retain any of the family possessions, or keep his temper in adversity. We hear of him fighting duels in Nova Scotia, while Hester and her mother were under the care of Cotton or Salusbury uncles, of whom the

latter became a devoted guardian, delighting in her precocity, and providing her with excellent tutors.

Mr. Salusbury's return, however, upset the household, and Sir Thomas " ran to a smiling widow—just at the Park Gate " : bound thus to find a husband for his niece. His choice fell on the *bon vivant* Henry Thrale, with the " manners of Milamant in Congreve's Comedy," who diligently courted her mother, and thus won the only lady who would consent " to live in the Borough," at " Deadman's Place, Southwark " ; where " people admired how happy the brewer must be in such a *wonder* of a wife."

Mr. Thrale, however, was soon tempted to higher ambitions, in which she " grew useful, *almost* necessary." They settled in Streatham Park ; he was elected " Member for Streatham " ; and their mutual admiration for Dr. Johnson established the famous circle of wits and witlings ; which adopted the " Blue " aversion to cards or gaming, was less bizarre than Mrs. Montagu's assemblies, less bohemian than Dr. Burney's entertainments, served by a far better cook : " We had a noble dinner and a most elegant dessert."

Johnson was domineering but devoted, sharing the closest intimacies of family life, snubbing or petting the crowd of guests. Mrs. Thrale became the fashion, and if not altogether contented, quite

obviously enjoyed her fame of patroness, with wit to roar among the lions. Her social activities, moreover, were varied and extended by travel, mostly with Johnson in attendance ; and she knew how to make real friends.

A cloud rose on the horizon, however, when Thrale's secret passion for speculation tempted him to " make beer without the *beggarly elements* of malt and hops " ; and only his wife's amazing energy, cash contributions, and business acumen preserved the brewery from disaster. He became, however, almost permanently morose ; continually indulged his natural fondness for over-eating ; and died of apoplexy in 1781.

Though not, by eighteenth-century standards, technically a bad husband, despite his more or less open infidelity, few men can have been so cold and insolently indifferent as Thrale. The four daughters who had survived infancy, of their twelve children, inherited these repellent characteristics, with more direct hostility to their mother.

Though now at last, in a sense, her own mistress, obviously thankful for freedom, and very ready to exchange social brilliance for genuine affection and a more simple life, Mrs. Thrale was, temporarily at least, in greater suffering and distress than ever before. The necessary financial adjustments were not only complicated but rendered painful by ill-

feeling; and though Johnson was very active, and possibly of some assistance, in helping her to realize the estate, he quickly developed a most unpleasant and embarrassing disposition to absolute tyranny. Thrale, in fact, had quite properly kept him in his place; and he appears to have now assumed that Mrs. Thrale had no right to think or act for herself. We need not, perhaps, hold Johnson altogether to blame, but Macaulay's eloquent tirade against ingratitude was surely placed on the shoulders that least deserved it.

Mrs. Thrale, however, was now to affront her friends and the world by a declaration of independence that, for a time, put her entirely outside the pale. The indecent abuse flung at her "partiality" for Piozzi was monstrously unjust, and is now ridiculed without remorse. We need only be thankful she did not allow it to spoil her life. Nevertheless there *are* explanations, if not excuses, which modern criticism has chosen to ignore. There were three grave objections to the gentleman —according to convention: he was a Papist, a foreigner, and a public performer. In other cases, Mrs. Thrale herself assumed, and even expressed, a little of the prejudice prevailing against all such persons. And when Dr. Burney admitted her right to "consult her own notions of happiness, *had not the paramount duty of watching over her un-*

married daughters interfered," he was only saying what every one thought: little as the young ladies deserved any consideration from her. Miss Thrale, in fact, found it hard to " arrange life " for herself and Sophia; her strong-minded self-discipline and efficiency should not be overlooked.

For herself, their mother had chosen wisely and well. As Mrs. Piozzi she became far more natural and spontaneous; the genuine excellences of her nature were given full play; her literary activities were encouraged; and she made firmer and happier friendships than she had lost. The scandalous notoriety and private spite occasioned by the marriage practically drove them out of the country for a while, and three years spent in Italy among her husband's people served at once to heal the wounds and open up new fields of culture and enjoyment.

But Piozzi, no less than she, had always desired an English home; and when the exiles ventured to return in 1787, she was more or less reinstated with honour and affection. She had already published her *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*, forestalling Boswell; her *Observations and Reflections* on the Continent were to appear shortly; and if neither volume altogether escaped the malice of the critics, they brought her back into the limelight with scarcely diminished fame.

The old circle had lost its centre; and she had

no desire to precisely repeat the past. Piozzi, indeed, spent £2000 on Streatham Park; and they occasionally "received" old and new friends in the familiar surroundings; but his permanent ambition was to revive the family dignities in Wales, where he first repaired Bachygraig, and afterwards erected a "pretty villa," in the Italian style, called the Beautiful Brow, Brynbella, in the valley of Clwyd. Mrs. Piozzi proved a charming Lady of the Manor, and keenly enjoyed the part. They made a home for the youngest daughter, Cecilia, who, though troublesome and ungrateful, provided abundance of young society, and the almost continual interest of her numerous affairs.

There were inevitable quarrels with "the ladies" (Miss Thrale and Sophia), to whom Piozzi was always personally generous, and other disturbances of the peace from various outside quarters; but this middle-age romance seems to have never lost its first glow, or been clouded by disagreements. Twenty-five years is no small allowance of such happiness for mortal woman. Only ill-health, and the mutual anxieties it occasioned, pursued the pair. Her constitution, indeed, had already survived more severe tests; but Piozzi was no less frail in body than gentle in mind, and his periodical attacks of gout gradually became a serious and distressing menace which proved fatal in 1809.

Once more driven to take life into her own hands, a second widowhood brought with it no sense of freedom, rather a loss beyond repair ; but her vitality never suffered defeat, and it is actually from her copious correspondence with sympathetic friends like the charming Quaker Mrs. Pennington, the highly cultivated Sir James Fellowes, and the Rev. Dr. Whalley of the " beautiful long legs," that she created for us the most vivid picture of her " famous period " in reminiscent allusions or reflections, during her retirement at Clifton and Bath. She was, meanwhile, actively careful, though with reckless extravagance, about the affairs of a Piozzi nephew, a boy of fourteen when his uncle died, who was given her maiden name, and became ultimately distinguished as the third Sir John Salusbury.

She celebrated her eightieth birthday by a concert, ball, and supper in the " Lower Rooms," to which some seven hundred " cards of invitation were distributed," where she herself led off the dance at two o'clock in the morning, maintained the spirit of festivity till " the company separated in great good humour " at five ; and was ready the next morning to talk and laugh over their keen enjoyment of the " substantial as well as elegant " midnight feast.

So passed January 27, 1820, and in another twelvemonth " she closed her various life about

nine o'clock, with as little suffering as could be imagined under these awful circumstances": when at last "unable to articulate," tracing "a coffin in the air with her hands."

III

Mrs. Thrale was at once inaccurate and transparently sincere. She has given us a lively and affectionate full-length portrait of Dr. Johnson, that is no less indispensable than "Boswell" for any adequate understanding. Her "familiar letters" further reveal her own remarkable personality and, with the *Ancedotes of Samuel Johnson*, the *Thraliana*, the *New Commonplace Book*, *Autobiographical Memoirs*, the *Marginal Notes* on Boswell, and other *Miscellanies*, offer a mine of delightful gossip and information from the past; immensely valuable to the student and, for the most part, of great interest to every reader.

The *Observations and Reflections* made in the course of a journey through France, Italy, and Germany (2 vols., 1789) were, necessarily, composed from more superficial observation, but have similar merits.

She also published:—

British Synonymy, or, an attempt at regulating the choice of words in familiar conversation (2 vols., 1794); and

Retrospection; or a Review of the most striking and important events, characters, situations, and their consequences, which the last eighteen hundred years have presented to the view of mankind (2 vols., 1801).

Neither work could possibly be called scholarly or scientific: both are almost ridiculously ambitious.

By her contemporaries, Mrs. Thrale's "animated pages" were charged with "vulgarism"; because she defied Johnson and anticipated Wordsworth by the "theory that books should be written in the same colloquial and idiomatic language which is employed in conversation." But she actually contrived to light up her treatise on language with amusing anecdotes; and her distinctions between the real meaning, and proper use, of such words as "fondness" and "affection," "ay" and "yes," or "elegant" and "graceful," are always ingenious and not infrequently sound.

Such an attempt as *Retrospection* is very characteristic of Mrs. Thrale. She herself could scarcely have anticipated any real success, but once "so vast a canvass" had captured her imagination, I have no doubt she was eager to fill in the "appropriate groups and figures." She suspected herself of having improperly chosen her facts; but historical criticism would be misplaced here. We

may rather apply the contemporary verdict of Miss Carter's *Epictetus* that, probably, no *man* of the age could have done so well ; and she does, in fact, produce, just what precisely reflects her exceptionally shrewd powers of observation, a very reasonable " impression of the stream of history, lighted up with striking traits of manners and character." Given the necessary patience, we may here once more discover new hints on familiar names, an original point of view to modify or extend traditional estimates.

That was always and everywhere Mrs. Thrale's gift to literature.

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

LETTERS

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

July 17, 1770.

SIR,

It is unlucky enough that my power of acknowledging and returning civility should fail just now, when you are daily giving me occasion to exert it; unmercifully indeed, and I fear with some wicked intention, to wear it quite out.

I see your gang;—the heads of it, however, have for this time, as you say, avoided suspicion. You have an *alibi* ready to prove; and Mr. Baretti's book shews, that he has been employed among more entertaining papers: 'tis a most pleasing performance, and meets with eager readers in our house: even Mrs. ***** is sure that *such* a gentleman must keep a carriage, though not so fine a one, *no sure*, as Mr. Thrale's.

I have been very bad of an odious sore throat, which few escape: all the little ones are well though; so is my mother, so is my master. All send their best compliments to Mr. Johnson; and Mr. Thrale particularly vexes lest you should not see Matlock on a moon-light night.

I am, &c.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

May 23, 1773.

I write again, Dear Sir, though the time of meeting is so near, and should be sorry to think my flattery did *not* please you—if flattery it is—but I call it honest praise. Other people make more bustle about your merits every day, and you bear them patiently enough; pray let my incense-pot have a place among the rest. Mr. Thrale swears he found you one morning last week in the midst of a heap of men, who, he says, carried each a brass-headed cane in his hand, and that they were all flattering away *à qui mieux mieux*. Surely there was not in the whole company one to be found who uttered expressions of esteem with more sincerity than myself; none of them think you as much exalted over the common herd of mortals as I think you; and none of them can praise you from a purer motive. It is my consolation to have a wise friend, my delight to declare that I know him such; nor is this a time when I can afford to lose either delight or consolation. Should a man protest indeed, that a fever-fit would be more welcome to him than the detecting me in an error, I might reasonably enough begin to be alarmed, and fear that he was flattering me grossly—but I never did vent my partiality in any terms half as violent as those; and yet dear Mr. Johnson, who gravely says *that* of old Celsus, has the courage to reprove me for flattering.

Well! I was told this morning, that G——

O—— speaks very highly of our master up and down ; as I believe he hates us all, *he* cannot be accused of playing the sycophant : the extorted praise of an enemy however, though in many respects grateful enough, has somewhat offensive in it too, like the coarse perfume obtained by chymical operations on a poisonous substance, while the natural emanation of a friend's good will resembles the reviving scent of vegetable fragrance. I am glad, at all events, that he is forced to speak respectfully, and even my poor mother enjoys the thought.

What a loss am I about to endure in her death ! Let me hope that your kindness may prompt you to soothe the pain, and as far as it is possible to fill up the chasm ; though you shall permit me to add my firm persuasion that all endeavours will be insufficient. If the Emperor of China should take from one of his slaves the liberty of ever more tasting water, rice, or tea, he would be very ill compensated, poor soul ! by the free use of every dainty his master's magnificent table could afford him. No companion however wise, no friend however useful, can be to me what my mother has been : her image will long pursue my fancy ; her voice for ever hang in my ears : may her precepts but sink into my heart ! When fortune is taken away, chance or diligence may repair it ; fame likewise has been found not wholly irrecoverable.— *My* loss alone can neither be restored nor supplied in this world ; I will try to turn my best thoughts

upon another. Meanwhile, a million of things press upon me *here*, and force me to defend a post scarcely tenable; give me your company, your counsel, and your prayers, for I am ever

Your truly faithful servant.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

STREATHAM, *June* 24, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

Your letters are very kind and very pleasing: the last came just as I was setting out for the regatta, of which you have a right to the best description I can give; but first let us talk of ourselves, each other, and our friends. I am glad the Miss Astons treat you with such good things, but would not have the currants of Stowhill preferred to the grapes of Streatham, for that is mere *partiality*, a *word* you never use, so you are bound to scorn the *thing*. Why does Miss **** never find a place in the letters from Lichfield? I thought her a mighty elegant amiable country lady.

Mr. **** is pedantic enough; a good man however you say, and has a strong desire of being agreeable. 'Tis very flattering to me when people make my talents the subject of their praises, in order to obtain your favour.

Lady *** should not have taken the tea before her mother, that 's certain, as her husband is dead, and all pretence of supporting the rank he had given her is past, so not only natural but artificial propriety

was violated, and I can find no excuse for her conduct, except too attentive an observation to dear Mr. Johnson's odd speeches against parental authority.

Now for the regatta, of which, Baretti says, the first notion was taken from Venice, where the gondoliers practise rowing against each other perpetually, and I dare say 'tis good diversion where the weather invites, and the water seduces to such entertainments ;—here, however, it was not likely to answer ; and I think nobody was pleased.

Well ! Crœsus promised a reward, you remember, for him who should produce a new delight ; but the prize was never obtained, for nothing that was new proved delightful ; and Dr. Goldsmith, three thousand years afterwards, found out, that whoever did a new thing did a bad thing, and whoever said a new thing said a false thing.—So yestermorning a flag flying from some conspicuous steeple in Westminster gave notice of the approaching festival, and at noon the managers determined to hold it on that day. In about two hours the wind rose very high, and the river was exceedingly rough ; but the lot was cast, and the ladies went on with their dresses. It had been agreed that all should wear white ; but the ornaments were left to our own choice. I was afraid of not being fine enough ; so I trimmed my white lutestring with silver gauze, and wore black ribbons intermixed. We had obtained more tickets than I hoped for, though Sir Thomas Robinson gave us

none at last; but he gives one such a profusion of words, and bows, and compliments, that I suppose he thinks every thing else superfluous.—Mr. Cator was the man for a real favour at last, whose character is directly opposite, as you know; but if both are actuated by the spirit of kindness, let us *try* at least to love them both,—yet still—

> Prefer the stronger effort of its pow'r,
> And justly set the gem above the flow'r.

He wished Hester to go, and she wished it too, and her father wished it, so I would not stand out, though my fears for her health and safety lessened the pleasure her company always gives.—The D'Avenants then, Mr. Cator, Mr. Evans, Mr. Seward, and ourselves set about being happy with all our might—and tried for a barge to flutter in all together. The barges however were already full, and we were to be divided and put into separate boats. The water was rough, even seriously so; the time glided away in deliberation of what was to be done; and we resolved at last to run to the house of a gentleman in the Temple, of whom we knew nothing but that he was D'Avenant's friend, and look at the race from his windows—then drive away for Ranelagh in time to see the barges drawn up, and the company disembark. Of the race, however, scarce any thing could be seen, for clouds of dust that intercepted one's sight; and we have no balconies to see shows from, as are provided in countries where processions make much of the

means of entertainment; so we discomposed our head-dresses against each other, by struggling for places in an open window, and then begged pardon with curtsies, which exposed our trains to be trod on, and made us still more out of humour. It was however a real pleasure to look at the crowd of spectators. Every shop was shut; every street deserted; and the tops of all such houses as had any catch of the river swarmed with people like bees settling on a branch. Here is no exaggeration, upon my honour; even the lamp-irons on Westminster bridge were converted into seats, while every lighter lying in the Thames bore men up to the top-mast head. This was the true wonder of the day. Baretti says, he will shew us finer sights when we go to Italy; I believe him; but shall we ever see so populous a city as London? So rich a city? So happy a city? I fancy not.

> Let bear or elephant be e'er so white,
> The people sure, the people are the sight.

They could not indeed be very attentive to the games like those Horace talks of; for here was neither panther nor camel; no pretence to draw us together, as I could find;—yet they sat so thick upon the slating of Whitehall, that nobody could persuade me for a long while out of the notion that it was covered with black, till through a telescope we spied the *animals in motion*, like magnified mites in a bit of old cheese. Well! from this house in the Temple we hasted away to Ranelagh, happy

in having at least convinced a hundred folks we never saw before and perhaps never shall see again, that we had tickets for the regatta, and fine clothes to spoil with the rain, and that we were not come thither like the vulgar—in good time! only to see the boat-race. And now, without one image of Cleopatra's galley, or Virgil's games, or one pretext to say how it put us in mind of either, we drove to Ranelagh, and told each other all the way how pretty it would be to look at the ladies disembarking to musick, and walking in procession up to the rotunda. But the night came on; the wind roared; the rain fell; and the barges missing their way, many came up to the wrong stairs; the managers endeavoured to rectify the mistake, and drive them back, that some order might be kept, and some appearance of regularity might be made; but the women were weary and wet, and in no disposition to try for further felicity out of the old common road, so the procession was spoiled, and as to musick we heard none but screams of the frighted company as they were tossed about at the moment of getting to shore. Once more then all were turned loose to look for pleasure where it could be found: the rotunda was not to be opened till twelve o'clock, when the bell was to call us to sup there; the temporary building was not finished, and the rain would not permit walking in the garden.—Calamity however vanishes often upon a near approach, does not it? as well as happiness. We all crowded into the new building, from whence

we drove the carpenters, and called for cards, without the help of which, by some fatality, no day dedicated to amusement is ever able to end.

Queeney said there was no loss of the ornaments intended to decorate Neptune's hall; for she saw no attempt at embellishment, except a few fluttering rags like those which dangle from a dyer's pole into the street, and in that room we sat telling opinions, adventures, &c. till supper was served, which the men said was an execrable one, and I thought should have been finer. Was nothing good then? you begin to exclaim; here is desire of saying something where little is to be said, and lamentations are the readiest nonsense my mistress can find to fill her letter with. No, no; I would commend the concert and the catch-fingers for an hour if you would hear me; the musick was well selected, and admirably executed; nor did the company look much amiss when all the dismal was over, and we walked round Ranelagh a little in the old way; every body being dressed in white was no advantage indeed to the general appearance. Lord Bacon, who knows every thing small and great better than any one else, very judiciously recommends full colours and loud musick for a midnight show; the pale pinks and pea-greens make a mean figure by candle-light, says he, and if they look pitiful, how much more so does white look? The truth is, one has always an idea of privation conveyed to one's mind by it, which inspires me with melancholy; and perhaps the consciousness that

it implies weakness may be the latent reason—for I really never did hear of a white horse winning a race (we don't talk of grey); and I well remember the difficulty of raising white fawns among the deer when I was a child; the *blanche rose* has a scent less powerful than the red one; and you always chuse to eat black grapes. Under the pole every creature becomes white we know, for no very creditable reason; and in a few years my hair will probably confirm my argument.—In the mean time we will finish the regatta, which ended with country dances.—But I think the rakes and courtezans had that part of the diversion to themselves. There were a vast many of our common acquaintance among the company. You will be told that I was too fine, and 'tis partly true, but the other extreme would have been worse, and Mr. Thrale chose my dress himself.

We returned safe home about five or six o'clock; a new scene to Hester, who behaved sweetly, and had no fears in the crowd, but prodigious surprize in finding it broad day when we came out. I might have wondered too, for few people have frequented publick places less than myself, and for the first six years after my marriage, as you know, I never set my foot in any theatre or place of entertainment at all. What most amazed me about this regatta, however, was the mixture of company, when tickets were so difficult to obtain. Some body talked at Ranelagh of two ladies that were drowned, but I have no doubt that was a dream.

Will this account serve to divert Miss Lucy Porter and your other Lichfield ladies? If it will, the hour has been happily spent that wrote the *immortal letter of the regatta*. Of the next frolick we engage in I hope you will be yourself *pars magna*, or at worst I hope you will hear it from the lips of

Your ever faithful and obedient servant.

P.S.—I will lose as little of the epitaph as 'tis possible, nay I will lose none, for the reduction of the character will accommodate matters to the stone, and the words are not useless, because they are not large.—My mother's character will bear the *nearest approach* in every sense; and your writing is worth more I hope than walking five steps to read it, so pray leave nothing out: she cannot be praised too much; and if I did not think that compression added force, I should not find her panegyrick half long enough even now.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

August 9, 1775.

You ask, dear Sir, if I keep your letters—to be sure I do; for though I would not serve you as you said you would serve Lady ——, were you married to her,—live a hundred miles off, and make her write once o'week (was not it?) because her conversation and manners were coarse, but her letters elegant: yet I have always found the best supplement for talk was writing, and yours particularly so.

My only reason to suppose that we should dislike looking over the correspondence twelve or twenty years hence, was because the sight of it would *not* revive the memory of cheerful times at all. God forbid that I should be less happy then than now, when I am perpetually bringing or losing babies, both very dreadful operations to me, and which tear mind and body both in pieces very cruelly. Sophy is at this very instant beginning to droop, or I dream so ; and how is it likely one should ever have comfort in revising the annals of vexation ?

You say too, that I shall not grow wiser in twelve years, which is a bad account of futurity ; but if I grow happier I shall grow wiser, for being less chained down to surrounding circumstances, what power of thinking my mind naturally possesses will have fair play at least. The mother or mistress of a large family is in the case of a tethered nag, always treading and subsisting on the same spot ; she hears and repeats the same unregarded precepts ; frets over that which no fretting can diminish ; and hopes on, in very spite of experience, for what death does not ever suffer her to enjoy. With regard to mental improvement, Perkins might as well expect to grow rich by repeating the Multiplication Table, as I to grow wise by holding Watt's " Art of Reading " before my eyes. A finger-post, though it directs others on the road, cannot advance itself ; was it once cut into coach wheels, who knows how far it might travel ?

When Ferguson made himself an astronomer,

the other lads of the village were loading corn and pitching hay,—though with the same degree of leisure they might perhaps have attained the same degree of excellence ; but they were *doing* while he was *thinking*, you see, and when leisure is obtained, incidents, however trifling, may be used to advantage ; besides that 'tis better, as Shakespeare says, to be eaten up with a rust,

> Than scour'd to nothing with perpetual motion.

So if ever I get quiet I shall get happy ; and if I get happy I shall have a chance to get wise. Why, wisdom itself stands still, says Mr. Johnson, and then how will you advance ? It will be an advancement to me to trace that very argument, and examine whether it has advanced or no. Was not it your friend M——l who first said, that next to winning at cards, the greatest happiness was losing at cards ? I should feel the second degree of delight in assuring myself that there was no wisdom to be obtained. Baker's " Reflections on Learning " was always a favourite book with me, and he says, you have all been trotting in a circle these two or three thousand years—but let us join the team at least, and not stand gaping while others trot. The tethered horse we talked of just now, would beg to work in our mill, if he could speak ; and an old captain of a ship told me, that when he set the marine society boys to run round the hoop for a pudding in fine weather, to divert the officers, those who were hardest lashed seldom lamented ; but all cried, ready to break

their hearts, who were left out of the game. Here is enough of this I believe.

We are all pleased that you intend to come home in a chaise. Who should you save sixteen shillings for? and how much richer would your heirs be for those sixteen shillings? Calculation is perpetually opposed to the spendthrift; but if misers would learn to count, they would be misers no longer: for how many years must a man live to save out of a small income one hundred pounds, even if he adopted every possible method? besides the ill-will of the world, which pursues avarice more closely, and watches it more narrowly than any other vice.

I have indeed often wondered that the bulk of mankind should look on a person who gains money unjustly with less detestation than they survey the petty savings of him who lives penuriously;—for the first is in every body's way, and if he excited every body's hatred, who need wonder? while a hoarder injures no one but himself—yet even his heirs abhor him.

There is, however, little call I believe to make sermons against covetousness for the use of dear Mr. Johnson, or of his

Faithful and obedient servant,

H. L. Thrale.

Sophy is very sick, and we all wish you would come home.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

BATH, *May* 3, 1776.

MY DEAR SIR,

This month, which finds or makes every body else inclined to be cheerful, finds me with hope depressed, sorrow renewed, and affliction budding out where pleasure only should vegetate. This little girl's state of health hinders me from recovering the loss I sustained in her brother.—What *can* ail her? I would have persuaded Mr. Thrale to persist in his intentions of travelling, had I not thought it dangerous to *her*; it would perhaps have been better for *us*; I mean for our health, not for our improvement, because going abroad to see objects with a pre-occupied mind is mere loss of time;—one remembers nothing one either sees or hears when in a state of affliction. Poor people have always bad memories, you may observe;—how should they have good ones; their hearts are full, poor dears, no room for observation and attention, the two parents of memory; and indeed the happiest people, as far as my acquaintance has gone, have had the retentive powers of mind in much the greatest perfection. Baretti said, you would be very angry because this dreadful event made us put off our Italian journey, but I knew you better. Who knows even now that 'tis deferred for ever? Mr. Thrale says, he shall not die in peace without seeing Rome, and I am sure he will go no-where that he can help without you.

Let us try to heal our hearts first;—mine is always cracking again though, as soon as it begins to skin over; and Dr. Woodward gave me a very interesting and rational account of the effect grief has upon the heart this very morning. When your mind is firmly fixed to one subject, said he, you forbear to draw your breath for several moments, and then repair the suspension by a long and deep sigh; this long continued checks the blood's course through the pulmonary artery, and gives the variation of the pulse which attends agitated and distressed minds; a cough succeeds, in consequence of the lungs being affected, while the heart gets concretions or collections of water in its pericardium —the bag which surrounds it, as I understand; so that our vulgar expression of sorrow breaking one's heart is founded on fact and nature. He told me too, that numberless patients die ultimately of grief —their exit being attributed to the immediate cause only, instead of the remote one. He has ordered my poor master and me to jump every morning into a cold bath; we have here a remarkably fine one. Meantime do not suspect me for being likely to provoke Heaven's judgments on my daughters, by fretting unnecessarily for the loss of my son. I feel ten times fonder of them than ever I felt before, and am desirous to live for their sake and their father's.

Pray bring or send us your cluster of political writings, for I love them dearly—not as political writings, but as vehicles for truth and sentiment

on twenty, ay fifty subjects with which politicks have nothing to do.

Should you write about Streatham and Croydon, the book would be as good to me as a journey to Rome, exactly; for 'tis Johnson, not Falkland's islands, that interests us, and your style is invariably the same. The sight of Rome might have excited more reflections indeed than the sight of the Hebrides, and so the book might be bigger, but it would not be better a jot.

How does Dr. Taylor do? He was very kind I remember when my thunder-storm came first on, so was Count Manucci, so was Mrs. Montague, so was every body. The world is not guilty of much general harshness, nor inclined I believe to increase pain which they do not perceive to be deserved.—Baretti alone tried to irritate a wound so very deeply inflicted, and he will find few to approve his cruelty. Your friendship is our best cordial; continue it to us, dear Sir, and write very soon to

Your obliged and faithful servant.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

BATH, *May* 16, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

I had no notion of your staying away from us so long, or you should not surely have wanted a letter; you might reasonably expect, and claim indeed my best thanks for the sweet visit paid five days ago to my babies: a most friendly action in you, and a

most polite one in dear Dr. Taylor, and what I had never been hoping for. All unexpected pleasures are doubly precious.

Grata superveniet quæ non sperabitur hora.

When one has worn out one's fancy in anticipation of any event, the impression it makes must necessarily be weaker I suppose, and those pains, however piercing, for which we have time to prepare ourselves, do not break the constitution in pieces like a sudden shock that comes upon us unawares. I ought above all people to understand these matters from harsh experience of the severest sorrow. My mind, by the death of such a mother and of such a son, resembles a nation wasted by famine for three years together, and then shattered to final confusion by an earthquake.

Of past afflictions, however, we will now talk no longer. Mr. Thrale is recovering from his share of the distress, and it is my duty to accelerate, not retard, his return to cheerfulness and good-humour.

Dr. Taylor shall carry his cause. I *will have* him carry it. 'Tis a good cause probably; and if it is not, women (you tell me) never stop at integrity;—and as I understand the laws of friendship much better than I do the laws of Great Britain, will decide in a truly female manner, that he shall carry his cause—for this truly female reason—it was so very sweet in him to go and see my little girls.

Count Manucci would wait seven years to come with you; so do not disappoint the man, but bring

him along with you. His delight in your company is like Boniface's exultation, when the 'squire speaks Latin; for understand you he certainly cannot. No flattery perhaps is more delicate however, or more pleasing than that of exciting admiration where one is not able to gratify curiosity; and all this nobleman desires is to count Johnson among his English friends when he returns to Florence, where I am told he stands very high for literature as well as birth.

We have a flashy friend here already, who is much your adorer; I wonder how you will like *him*? An Irishman he is; very handsome, very hot-headed, loud and lively, and sure to be a favourite with you, he tells us, for he can live with a man of *ever so odd a temper*. My master laughs, but likes him, and it diverts me to think what you will do when he professes that he could clean shoes for you; that he could shed his blood for you; with twenty more extravagant flights—— And you say, *I* flatter! *Upon my honour, Sir, and indeed now*, as Dr. C——l's phrase is, *I am but a twitter to him.*

Well! you hate Bath; and will be very uncomfortable when you come this time I believe; for, after all, I *must* be civil to my aunt, who is exceedingly kind to me; and I must dress and go out, and do like other people, or you will be first to censure and condemn me; more than that, our dear master, who cannot be quiet without you for a week, will be always infallibly on your side, and encourage long lectures about the fit of a cap, which you will

not give me a minute to put on as it should be.—So I see my fate before it arrives.—Come to Bath though, and at least convince yourself that we are not rioting in felicities from whence you are cruelly excluded. Surely, since we have known each other, I have been no proper object of envy.

> Se a ciascun l'interno affanno
> 'Se leggesse in fronte scritto,
> Quanti mai ch'invidia fanno,
> Ci farebbono pietà !

And Dr. Young says what Metastasio sings you know, when he observes, that were the real feelings of every man exposed to the examination of his neighbours, one vice would be immediately eradicated, for envy then could be no longer found among the human race.

Do you recollect complaining once to me of flatulence, when I could really with difficulty sit to hear you for very agony both of body and soul.—I 'm sure I recollect your kind recantation, when you confessed that it was like lamenting a scratched finger in his chamber, who, the day before, had broken both his legs.

Mr. Thrale, thank God, is very comfortably set up again. The last hard gale blew him almost down though ; and I hardly hoped Bath would have been able to do so much ; but he scorns the *black dog* now : he will swing him round and round soon as Smollet's heroes do, who in every alliterated novel, " Roderick Random " or " Peregrine Pickle," are always employed by their author to kill a dog, when

he means that they should strike the reader's fancy, and win his heart with their prowess. That man hated dogs I imagine, and certainly understood little about them, for he talks of a spaniel, *Sweetlips*, which is not a spaniel's name ever, but a hound's ; she is so called from the music of her tongue in the chace ; not Sweetlips for fondness, and because her master delights in kissing her, as he seems to think—I never heard so foolish a notion in my life.

Here is a long letter about nothing—Just such a one as you wanted I hope. Those which begin *Great Sir* have not been wanting, I 'll answer for them. Did not some notion wander about the world lately of taking beggar's letters under consideration ? We should produce a good number between your house and ours.

A propos, poor ***** does not to be sure excel in oratory, but in gratitude few exceed him. 'Tis such a dolorous dog, says my master, or I would buy some of his trumpery myself. Poor, poor creature ! his disappointed hopes, present fears, and earnests of future misery, are too melancholy to be dwelt upon ; but you and I have done our best for him, and there seems a fate on all he undertakes : yet when we saw him sit down in his own wretched apartment, possessed of one broken chair with arms to it,—and try to look magnificent—could one refrain from laughing ? though we agreed too, that in the sight of superior beings he was not more ridiculous than a king upon his throne. One

mite is like another mite to him that looks at both through a microscope.

Farewel, dear Sir, and expect a long letter from Queeney, though not quite as long as this from

Your ever faithful servant.

I 'll make Mr. Thrale frank this letter *himself* for a fancy.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

Sept. 18 [1777].

DEAR SIR,

I have got some news that will please you now. Here is an agreeable friend come from Paris, whom you were very fond of when we were there—the Prior of our English Benedictine Convent, Mr. Cowley. I did not know him again ; so much was he altered by the change of dress. How capricious and absurd one is always ! I feel longing to call him *Father* Prior now ; and upon the continent my scruple hindered me from using an appellation clearly and absolutely prohibited by our Saviour's own words in the gospel. The same objection however would again return if I was out of England again ; but here, where one knows such words carry no meaning of more serious import, I long to call him *Father* Prior for fondness. He enquires much for you ; and says, Wilkes is very well, No. 45. as they call him in the Convent. A cell is always kept ready for your use, he tells me ; so when your cruel mistress turns you out, no harm

will come of it; and when Mr. Thrale dismisses me, I am to take refuge among the Austin Nuns, and study Virgil with dear Miss Canning.

Mr. Cowley is as pleasant company as ever. We asked Lord Mulgrave to meet him, and *he* said a thing so like a thing of your saying, that I will repeat it directly. We talked of England and France—The beds are softer there than here, quoth my master. Softer, if you will, but not so clean, Sir, replied the Prior.—No, no, dirty enough to be sure, confessed Mr. Thrale, but exceeding soft. Why then, interrupts Lord Mulgrave, one may infer, that a hog in England lives just like a gentleman in France I find—so there let the parallel rest. Now was not that speech quite in the spirit of our dear Mr. Johnson? —I think it will be carried about the town for yours sometime.

My husband bids me tell you that he examined the register, and that Levet is only seventy-two years old.

I hope your illness was but slight; I heard of it by mere accident, and believed but little; you have much of my incredulity to answer for, by perpetually detecting every body in falsehood so. Let this report, however, though not true, introduce a lecture on general caution; and a request that you will not strive to torture that iron constitution of yours quite to ruin, because you have nothing else to do. It were better bind books again, as you did one year in our thatched summer-house,

than weigh out doses of mercury and opium which are not wanted, and then complain that you are *hermetically sealed.* Very comical you are sure enough ; but 'tis better play droll tricks with any thing else than with one's health. Were we not all justly enraged at that wretched fellow for trying experiments on our business ? and now you will have a stroke at the next valuable possession we have.

Something always happens when you go to Lichfield ; and our sitting down thirteen to table yesterday made my fool's nerves flutter for Queeney. Her father and I were of no consequence one would think, or I might have thought of ourselves, but Mr. Murphy said, she had a hectic colour, and her first cousin ****** is now absolutely dying of a consumption, and I can't quiet my fears somehow, though I know them to be groundless.—*Can you tell how to controul thick-coming fancies?* Ah dear Sir, do pray try to govern your own, and do not take physick for *fun.*

Well ! we will have no more superstition *just now* if you please, because if one escapes this birthday time, the rest of the year is less dangerous ; we are on the watch always about this week of September—you for yourself, and I for Hester. Superstition is that which *superstet*, is not it ? and then I do think we have all due claim to the honour of being very superstitious, for we make much more ado than is necessary sure.

Come, here is news of Town-malling—the quiet

old-fashioned place in Kent, that you liked so because it was agreeable to your own notions of a rural life ; I believe we were the first people, except the master of it, who had for many years taken delight in the old coach without springs, the two roasted ducks in one dish, the fortified flower garden, and fir trees cut in figures.—A spirit of innovation has however reached even these at last.—The roads are mended ; no more narrow shaded lanes, but clear open turnpike trotting. A yew hedge, or an eugh hedge if you will, newly cut down too by his nephew's desire. Ah those nephews ! And a wall pulled away, which bore incomparable fruit—*to call in the country*—is the phrase. Mr. Thrale is wicked enough to urge on these rough reformers ; how it will end I know not. For your comfort, the square canals still drop into one another ; and the chocolate is still made in the room by a maid, who curtsies as she presents every cup. Dear old Daddy Brooke looks well and even handsome at eighty-one years old ; while I saw his sister, who is ninety-four years old, and calls him *Frankey*, eat more venison at a sitting than Mr. Thrale. These are the proper contemplations of this season. May my daughter and my friend but enjoy life as long, and use it as innocently as these sweet people have done. The sight of such a family consoles one's heart.

I am glad the Richmond scene diverted you ; my master laughed when I read it over to him ; but here is now nothing to tell but what has been often

repeated. Our Paris friends are melancholy I hear, and Madame de Bocages laments her state of low spirits; is there any foundation for the idea prevalent among us, that we are the only nation where hypocondriac diseases are frequent, and that the French are almost wholly free? You are not willing to believe with the herd in that particular I dare say; yet when a man is sick, you are always sending him to the continent,—I never can think for what,—he had better die at home; and the foreigners only get a notion of England's being unwholesome by seeing such consumptive looking creatures come out of it as flock to Nice, Montpelier, &c. I dare say they think we are all so; and you may remember the French ladies wondering at my healthy looks—which I shall never get again.

So adieu, dear Sir, and be content with this long volume of a letter from

Your truly faithful servant,

H. L. THRALE.

How could I write so much? and from Streatham? I admire at my own skill in spinning out so. Mr. Thrale is cured of his passion for Lady R—— already.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

October 1, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

It was because you teized me so about Boltcourt intelligence, that I fancied Mrs. Desmoulines'

letter would be as good, or better than mine; she was certainly more qualified than I could be, to write upon the subject. Her discontent is no new thing; if it proceeds from no new cause, she must bear without complaining, that which probably does not mend while she says nothing of the matter; but people will not endure to be teized for ever with fruitless lamentations for evils they cannot remove.

In some letter lately you wonder at my using black wax—for the paper was only not gilt—as if you had forgotten my numberless reasons for *mourning*, because you are not perpetually hearing me recall them to your memory. Affliction however is very good for us all I doubt not, or it would hardly be bestowed so liberally. The flower of an aloe tree is, I am told, so peculiarly sweet, that bees, best judges in such a case, seek it from an immense distance; we know how bitter the stem is, and how rarely we are indulged with the blossom. If a good parallel may be drawn from this reflection to human life, let us add another: a turnip is sweet to the taste, but gives a rancid and unpleasant flavour to every animal that feeds upon it. A life of peace and pleasure would probably have as bad an effect upon the mind of man. And now I think you will run to Mrs. Desmoulines, or any other Mistress, as a refuge from your *true* Mistress's pedantry. Does that word remind me of Lord **** ? I hope not: he has seen much, read much, and travelled much; he talks a great deal, and from

a very fashionably furnished mind.—When we saw him last, he bid me ask you whether there are three volumes, or only two, of Parker's History, or Parker's Memoirs, or some such thing. It was in Latin, and very fine Latin too he said. I knew not from beginning to end what he meant; and my ignorance reminded me of the maid servant Mr. Pepys tells of, who let her master know one morning that a gentleman had called when he was out the evening before, and begged he would lend him *three oxen and a hogshead*. You won't understand me, child, added he, but your master will; it was *Theocritus and Horace*'s works that were wanted; and I am much in the girl's case, for I comprehend not a syllable of ****'s request—and perhaps have transmitted it as wildly.

We have seen nothing but Mrs. **** here. She says all *****'s faults should be charged upon his mother, but then she is nobody's mother herself. How dreadful, instead of delightful, would it be, to contemplate one's house full of children, if all the future errors of each were to go to the mother's account! Yet would not my lot be heavy even *then*, for better babies breathe not—could I *but* keep them! than mine. Queeney shall send you a *proof-sheet* of her excellence to-morrow.

Poor S——y B——w is dying, they tell me; you liked her vastly that summer we were so much together with her at this place;—how happy Mr. Beauclerc is got better!—he is a prodigious favourite I know; but when you were sorry for poor old Dr.

F—zp——k it was mere virtue, as I think I never saw a stronger antipathy. Shall we write an epitaph upon him, and say, *He sat well at a table* ? —for that was the highest praise we could ever get you to allow him, even with Murphy's help. Saint Pavin's inscription would not be amiss for Fitzpatrick ; and there is a stroke in their lives too not very dissimilar.

Fitzpatrick 's dead—wert thou his friend ;
With tears lament thy lot :
Did fortune no such favour lend ?
Lament that thou wert not.

Sous ce tombeau gît Saint Pavin,
Donne des larmes à sa fin ;
Tu fus de ses amis peut-être ?
Pleure ton sort, pleure le sien ;
Tu n'en fus pas ? pleure le tien,
Passant, d'avoir manqué d'en être.

I cannot guess how long we are to stay here ; Mr. Thrale does not tell me, and I am, as you say, no good *winder*. Cardinal Alberoni was said to be so ingenious, that no concealed intentions of another could escape him ; but Jean Rousset, who writes his life, describes him as a rattling man too, that talked at all rates. Flashy, light, and loud conversation is often a cloke for cunning, I believe ; as showy life, and a gay outside spreads now and then a thin covering over avarice or poverty. The companion who rattles resembles a juggler, who, while your attention is fixed upon his talk, changes your gold into counters. This, however, I have

no higher authority for, than Alberoni's character —Richardson's way of winding was more cold and sly.

I have picked up some agreeable young folks, just come from school somewhere on the continent, who are going to London for the first time—with clear complexions, and hearts apparently as clear. We were saying how soon they would be altered. A capital city will, by even a short residence in it, change the whole mass. How florid, bright, and transparent is the arterial blood, before it has passed through the heart — metropolis of our human frame—for example ; and how muddy, gross and heavy in comparison is that which we draw from the veins in its return. But I must say no more— you would rather be sick in London, I remember, than well in the country.

When are we likely to meet ?—If the Doctor's waterfall roars happily, I think there is little chance, for a month, of your quitting Ashbourne, except to shew its environs to Mr. Boswell. Derbyshire is a glorious county, and affords much matter for speculation ; besides that, he will write down all you say, and all he says to you about every thing. Luckily for us his adorers, our dear Dr. Johnson wants very little *winding* ; we may all know your opinions by asking them the straightest way ; and mines are always best in a mountain where adits can most commodiously be made for bringing out the ore, you know.

Farewel, dear Sir, and love my husband, and

like my letters ; and pray be jealous of the S——'s and C——'s, they are so very likely to supply your loss to

Your most faithful humble servant,
H. L. THRALE.

P.S.—I am afraid you will be shocked at this story of Foote ; and what will Mr. Murphy say ?—I think he will feel very sorry. You must go to work hard about the Lives, and not let your fancy dwell upon it. These are just the things which business prevents from impressing one ; it has no power at all, though so gravely recommended, over serious grief or real loss.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

May 9 [1780].

MY DEAR SIR,

When did I ever plague you about contour, and grace, and expression ? I have dreaded them all three since that hapless day at Compeigne, when you teized me so, and Mr. Thrale made what I hoped would have proved a lasting peace ; but French ground is unfavourable to fidelity perhaps, and so now you begin again : after having taken five years breath, you might have done more than this.—Say another word, and I will bring up afresh the history of your exploits at St. Denys, and how cross you were for nothing—but some how or other, our travels never make any part either of our conversation or correspondence. I am willing to shew

myself in Southwark, or in any place, for my master's pleasure or advantage ; but have no present conviction that to be re-elected would be advantageous, so shattered a state as his nerves are in just now.—Do not you, however, fancy for a moment, that I shrink from fatigue—or desire to escape from doing my duty;—spiting one's antagonist is a reason that never ought to operate, and never does operate with me : I care nothing about a rival candidate's innuendos, I care only about my husband's health and fame ; and if we find that he earnestly wishes to be once more member for the Borough—he *shall* be member, if any thing done or suffered by me will help make him so.—This P—— and E——, and all the inhabitants of the Borough, friends and foes, are perfectly persuaded of, whatever they may say. I shall leave his daughter's governess when I quit Bath, if to quit it will be really wise—a better can he never have.

Mrs. Desmoulines has written, as we say, *oddishly* ; but since she asked your leave, &c., it is well enough. The anecdote at Mrs. Ord's is exceeding good :—I only wish I had been present to hear such a conversation. Mr. Fitzmaurice is always civiller both to you and me, than either of us deserve.—I wonder (as the phrase is) what he sees in us ?—Not much politeness surely.

The Lives will be admirable, but we will talk of them another time : it is not author's criticism ever, or rival's malignity, that gives lasting pain.

Thy tooth is not so keen, &c.

One friend's unkindness is harder to bear than the wisest, and justest, and harshest censures of all the wits and scholars put together ; besides, that the venom of the viper is restorative—I remember your telling me once that Doctor Nugent always squeezed the bag into his bason of broth while he was sick.—But if the *gens à talents*, as the French call them, agree to hate *me*, the Methodists love *you*, says my dear Mr. Johnson. I do hope that my amiable friend Mrs. Browne *does* love me, I mean with distinction ; for her sweet philanthropy inclines her to love and benefit the whole human race :—Why she should, however, be called a Methodist, you must tell—for 'tis considered always a term of reproach, I trust, because I never yet did hear that any one person called himself a Methodist. The lady we are now speaking of is a pious, charitable, peaceful Christian, who at thirty years old, though elegant in her person, and high in health and fortune, resolved upon leading a single life, that she might the better and the easier dedicate her thoughts to God, and her money to such of his poor creatures who might want it. Our theatres in those days were, I believe, but coarsely provided —and sometimes suffered scenes to be exhibited upon them, gross enough to wound a delicacy more blunted than her's—so she resolved to go no more herself ; and by uttering her notions of stage immorality, endeavoured to keep away as many acquaintances as she could. I heard her one evening throw out a pretty thought, and for ought I can

recollect, a new one too, concerning the death of some gay frisker here at Bath, where such lives and such deaths are common.

The closing hours of a mere pleasure-hunting mortal, said she, remind me of what I can recollect of a theatre when the play is done: all smoke, and stink of candles ill-extinguished, a confused crowd half lost in darkness, with women's screams from time to time heard at the door—horrible contrast to the gay show immediately preceding:—dismal end of a fabulous representation—gloomy conclusion of an airy and fantastic dream. Such a talker you see would not be easily *down'd*, as we call it, by my little whimsical comparison between solitude and society.

Well! but if you please we will speak seriously upon the subject—for I had a grave conversation with her about it again yesterday, on her expressing an earnest wish that Mr. Thrale would forego this foolish electioneering business, quit the world at once, and think only on his present health and future hopes. Was every one to do so, Madam, said I, upon the first attack of severe sickness, would it be right? besides, that there are vices peculiar to living alone, as there are others consequent upon commercial, or in any way tumultuous life; and I believe that the same intellectual regimen will no more suit all souls, than that the same diet will agree with all constitutions. Retirement, like the Sabbath, was made for man, not man for retirement; he who by nature or habit feels

himself giddy, wild, and dissipated, would be prudent in seeking his cure from silent contemplation ; but a sullen or sensual person is likely to find fewer incitements to *his* favourite crimes in a crowd.

They who converse freely with recluses, have heard strange tales of our arch-enemy's diligence even within convent walls ; and though my dear Mr. Johnson is justly enraged at the present spirit of irreverent rapacity which seeks to overthrow places once consecrated to religious retirement,—he is, I believe, himself persuaded that the retreats of piety were often too slight a shelter from gross temptations ; and that many mortals of each sex have retired to worse sins than those they left behind them in the world.

The danger of this age and nation is all on the other side to be sure—and so far I granted to Mrs. Browne:—but 'tis silly to live like the one-eyed doe in little Susan's fable-book, without knowing there is also danger on the other.

So here is a counterpart to the famous fellow who made himself immortal, by reading a military lecture to Hannibal ; yet I really repent no part of the conversation or letter—and am almost sure you will approve the sentiments.

Shall we have some chat about the Lives now ? that of Blackmore will be very entertaining, I dare say, and he will be rescued from the old wits who worried him, much to your disliking : so a little for love of his Christianity, a little for love of his

physick, a little for love of his courage—and a little for love of contradiction, you will save him from his malevolent criticks, and perhaps do him the honour to devour him yourself—as a lion is said to take a great bull now and then from the wolves which had fallen upon him in the desert, and gravely eat him up for his own dinner.

Here must end our correspondence for a while. Let me see you at the Borough-house as soon as I get there: every body says I must come up directly, and my master urges me, and I am going to arrange matters for my departure.—If I possess any of the wonderful powers you compliment me with, let me exert them now. Dear Sir Philip will lend me his valuable assistance—it will on this occasion be *in*-valuable, respected as he is by his own party. Here are letters come to call me to London—and they shall not find me dilatory now, nor lazy when I am arrived. Pray meet me, and add your counsel to our activity. Mrs. D—— will be my *douce compagne* upon the occasion, and every friend will bustle for poor dear Mr. Thrale this *one* time more! He shall, say you, bustle for himself the next time, and need none of us. Well, so he shall for ought I know; he is quite pert to-day, and so is

Your ever faithful and
obliged servant,
H. L. Thrale.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

May [1780].

DEAR SIR,

I am glad my letter was so good a one. I can certainly say nothing too good of Mr. Thrale, for seeming pleased that I had done what it was my indispensable duty to do, or of his daughter for behaving so sweetly in my absence. We found engagements out of number to be complied with; the first was a concert at the Dean of Ossory's (I like his lady violently), and that vexed me, because my looks were not recovered; and so I shone at the *Crescent* like a *pale moon* indeed.

Here is every thing in this pretty town of Bath—every thing possible; good and bad, for what I see. Did we tell you when we were in London the other day, how Miss Burney picked up a female infidel one morning, and bid her read "Rasselas"; and how I lighted on a fanatick, and bid *her* read "Rasselas"? Perhaps not, for you only call such intelligence flattery; though the London wits beat us at that too, when they talk of crying fire in the street, that they may break up a conversation which would otherwise engage them till next day. All this, however, we set on one side during the election hurry. My master will stand to his hand-bill; he *likes* it: and I like exceedingly your sullen removal from the *round tower*, where mushrooms would almost grow of themselves now, the weather is getting so hot. Our flagstones upon the South

Parade burn one's feet through one's shoes ; but the Bath belles, fearless of *fire ordeal*, trip about, secure in cork soles and a clear conscience. I wish though, that you would put in a word of your own to Mr. Thrale about eating less ; for he will mind you more than us, and his too great spirits just at this moment fright me. Oh, here comes Dr. Moysey, to talk about Whig and Tory, and the reign of King Charles the Second ; how that style of conversation does wear one out, especially from a professional man, and when one is wishing to bring forward a subject really interesting. It would be a choice comfort to me if the people would agree to hate dissension, and love one another, and mind their business, and hang the politicks. I am sure I had plague enough with such stuff at the Borough, no need to be pursued with it here. Talk to Lawrence if you can commodiously, and let me know the result.—I think the *one* glass of water which you scorn so has an effect, and that effect not a good one—it gives dizziness ; but there is no immediate harm coming, our Doctors say.

How does Congreve's life turn out ? Tell me all the news. I would not wish you to be *too much* flattered : milk itself, when injected into the veins, is poison, the wise men say ; so if adulation should be *forced* upon you, cry out, or run away to *me*, or any thing ; but I expect these Lives to be very clever things after all, take as little pains with them as you can : we will have all the great prose writers some time, and then I shall be zealous for Bacon.

Mean time, Heaven send this Southwark election safe, for a disappointment would half kill my husband ; and there is no comfort in tiring every friend to death in such a manner, and losing the town at last. How charmingly kind that dear Mr. Devaynes behaved. Well ! it was really clever management to carry Sir Philip and him about together so, at a time when they disagreed concerning every subject except serving me ; and how excessively agreeable they made themselves that day we dined in St. John's ! and how sweet it was to see them united closely in a cause of private friendship ! *All my doings*, says your boastful mistress : but I know that water, though the most insipid of all bodies, is the only thing which gives cohesion to every other, and which alone can unite the most heterogeneous substances.

I have no care about enjoying undivided empire, nor any thoughts of disputing it with Mrs. [Montagu]. She considers her title as indisputable most probably, though I am sure I never heard her urge it. Queen Elizabeth, you remember, would not suffer her's to be enquired into—and I have read somewhere that the Great Mogul is never crowned.

How shall I fill up the other side of the sheet ? With a date, if you please ; but it will, upon reconsideration, reach but a little way, so we had as good finish here, and say how much

I am, &c.,

H. L. THRALE.

From Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

BRIGHTHELMSTONE,
Wednesday, July 19, 1780.

And so my letters please you, do they, my sweet Burney? I know yours are the most entertaining things that cross me in the course of the whole week; and a miserable praise too, if you could figure to yourself my most dull companions. I write now from Bowen's shop, where he has been settled about three days I think; and here comes in one man hopping, and asks for *Russell on Sea-water*—another tripping, and begs to have the last new novel sent him home to-night; one lady tumbles the ballads about, and fingers the harpsichord which stands here at every blockhead's mercy; and another looks over the lilliputian library, and purchases "Polly Sugarcake" for her long-legged missey.

My master is gone out riding, and we are to drink tea with Lady Rothes; after which the Steyne hours begin, and we cluster round Thomas's shop, and contend for the attention of Lord John Clinton, a man who could, I think, be of consequence in no other place upon earth, though a very well-informed and modest-mannered boy. Dr. Pepys is resolutely and profoundly silent; and Lady Shelley, having heard wits commended, has taken up a new character, and says not only the severest but the cruellest things you ever heard in your life. Here is a Mrs. K——, too, sister to the Duchess of M——, who is very uncompanionable indeed, and

talks of *Tum*bridge. These, however, are literally all the people we ever speak to—oh yes, the Drummonds — but they are scarce blest with utterance.

Mr. Scrase mends, and I spent an hour with him to-day. Now have I fairly done with Brighthelmstone, and will congratulate myself on being quite of your advice—as Pacchierotti would call it —concerning Burke, the minor, whom I once met and could make nothing of.

Poor Mr. Chamier ! and poor Dr. Burney too ! The loss of real friends after a certain time of life is a terrible thing, let Dr. Johnson say what he will. Those who are first called do not get first home. I remember Chamier lamenting for Mr. Thrale, who will now, I verily think, live to see many of those go before him who expected to stay long after. He will not surely look strange upon you, for he is glad to see your letters ; though he does not sigh over them so dismally as he did yesterday, over one he saw I had directed to Chid.

Lord George Gordon is to be liberated upon bail, his quality brethren tell me. This, I think, contrary to the general disposition of the people, who appear to wish his punishment. But the thunder-cloud always moves against the wind, you know.

The going to Grub Street would have been a pretty exploit. Are you continuing to qualify yourself for an inhabitant ?

Sweet Mrs. Cholmondeley ! I am glad she can

frolic and frisk so:—the time will come too soon, that will, as Grumio expresses it, "tame man, woman, and beast,"—and thyself, fellow Curtis!

The players this year are rather better than the last; but the theatre is no bigger than a band-box, which is a proper precaution, I think, as here are not folks to fill even that. The shops are almost all shut still, and a dearth of money complained of that is lamentable; but we have taken some Spanish ships, it seems, and La Vera Cruz besides.

Adieu,—and divide my truest kindness among all the dear Newtonians,[1] and keep yourself a large share. You are in no danger of invaders from the sea-coast. Susan and Sophy bathe and glow, and riot me out of my senses. I am ever, my dear girl, most faithfully yours,

H. L. T.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

August 20 [1780].

I will try, my dear Sir, to make you some amends, by writing at least one very long letter; but indeed I can *think* only of one thing, whatever I may *say*.

Do you recollect our laughing fifteen years ago at a gawkee girl of seventeen? who, when her toast was called for at a city table crowded with coarse men —they were drinking sentiments—Is not, says she,

[1] That is, the family, then living in St. Martin's Street; in a house which formerly belonged to Newton.

this a pretty health—*What we think on most, and talk on least.* I am come pretty much to her case: for it is not right to speak of that which never fails to keep pressing upon my spirits, and preying upon my mind. Without frequent bleedings, there is however danger on one side, and by bleeding frequently, we induce as certain a danger on the other.—We had a visit yesterday from Mr. R——; whom perhaps you remember, perhaps not: but our morning conversation with him will not be easily forgotten by me, I thought it would drive me wild upon the spot. In such a case, can there be any fears of my *stealing away to Italy* without you? when I should not think you, nor twenty more such friends if I could find them, sufficient to guard us from the hazard of wild exploits. Whoever is sick, is surely safest at home; and have we not mortifications enough already, without going where one might be amused, in order to be miserable? Oh no, let us be miserable in the old places, and not pollute scenes of pleasure with objects of sorrow.

Well! as you say, Queeney is beginning life, and so far very happily, as it is begun under your tuition: she appears to me proud of your partiality; and, I dare say, will try long to deserve it. You are getting quite well as it appears; and when we meet, we shall see *victor annorum.* The Lives will be a standing proof of your powers after the grand climacterick; and you make gay impromptus upon the boys, instead of sitting down like common

mortals at seventy, and letting the boys make gay impromptus upon you.

Blackmore's life is admirable ; who says I don't like it? I like all the Whig lives prodigiously: Akenside's best of the little ones, for the sake of a pretty disquisition upon ridicule that pleased me particularly, and that elegant stricture on the "Pleasures of Imagination"; which will probably be much read and admired by every one. It is my sincere opinion that Milton, and Blackmore, and Thomson, would have been all contented with what you have said of *them*, though the admirers of "Lycidas" will be angry no doubt.

The censures of Milton's republican spirit would scarce have shocked him : he knew himself to be acrimonious and surly ; like Young's Busiris, who called himself the Proud, and gloried in it.

Your account of his domestick behaviour, however, puts me in mind of the fierce fellow in a droll book called "Pompey the Little," who comes home from the publick house, where he had been vapouring and storming away about liberty of speech—and treats his poor wife with the most brutal tyranny, only because she just says, *Indeed, my dear, I don't understand politicks*. Your harsh expressions of wrath against the author are, after all, so buried under the majestick praises bestowed upon "Paradise Lost," that even *I* am forced to forgive them. Poor dear Dr. Collier used always to bring that poem forward as a testimony to the excellence of Toryism ; for, says he, you may observe that 'tis

wholly formed upon *our* principles of obedience and subordination ; and I half wish, for the sake of my first friend, whose memory I shall for ever revere, that his remark had been preserved in this work of your's, which will doubtless be disseminated far and wide ; and, for ought I know, take possession of the lands on which it lights, as Don Sebastian said of the dust that his body when dead would be dried into.

And now if *you* call this flattery, I can leave off in a minute without bidding ; for since you *lions* have no skill in dandling the kid, we *kids* can expect but rough returns for caresses bestowed upon our haughty monarch—So be diligent, dear Sir, and have done with these men that have been buried these hundred years, and don't sit making verses that never will be written, but sit down steadily and finish their lives who *did* do something ; and then think a little about mine, which has not been a happy one, for all you teize me so concerning the pleasures I enjoy, and the flattery I receive, all which has nothing to do with comfort for the present distress, and sometimes I am angry when I read such stuff. That your two Sultanas are sick is very uncomfortable for you ; maybe Dr. Turton may do them good : I never saw Dr. Turton, but my heart, like Clarissa's, naturally leans towards a physician. *Le médecin et le curé*, as the French themselves, who have gayer hearts than mine, confess, are the last earthly objects on which the human hopes and human eyes are to

be fixed : and it is somewhat unfair not to let them take up a little of our affections beforehand.

If we do go to Michelgrove, Hester will write all one ; she is very attentive to her father, very dutiful, and very wise. I hope my anxiety is concealed from her pretty well, it would be exceedingly wrong to depress her spirits, and very dangerous to her health.

I am most sincerely, dear Sir,
Your faithful servant,
H. L. THRALE.

The conversation you inclosed I could have written myself ; as Juliet says, Yea, but all this did I know before.

Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

STREATHAM,
Thursday, January 4 [1781].

Don't I pick up franks prettily ? I sent a hundred miles for this, and the churl enclosed but one——" certain that Miss Burney could not live long enough away from me to need two." Ah, cruel Miss Burney ! she will never come again, I think.

Well ! but I did see Phillips written in that young man's honest face, though nobody pronounced the word ; and I boldly bid him "*Good morrow, Captain*," at the door, trusting to my own instinct when I came away. Your sweet father, however, this day trusted me with the whole secret,

and from my heart do I wish every comfort and joy from the match !

'Tis now high time to tell you that the pictures are come home, all but *mine*,—which my master don't like. He has *ordered* your father to sit to-morrow, in his peremptory way ; and I shall have the dear Doctor every morning at breakfast. I took ridiculous pains to tutor him to-day, and to insist, in *my* peremptory way, on his forbearing to write or read late this evening, that my picture might not have blood-shot eyes.

Merlin has been here to tune the forte-pianos. He told Mrs. Davenant and me that he had thoughts of inventing a particular mill to grind old ladies young, as he was so prodigiously fond of their company. I suppose he thought we should bring *grist*. Was that the way to put people in *tune* ? I asked him.

Doctor Burney says your letters and mine are alike, and that it comes by writing so incessantly to each other. I feel proud and pleased, and find I shall slip pretty readily into the Susan-nuccia's place, when she goes to settle on her £700 a-year ; of which God give her joy seven hundred times over, dear creature ! I never knew how it was to love an *incognita* but Susan Burney : my personal acquaintance with her is actually nothing—is it ? —and yet we always seem to understand one another.

H. L. T.

Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

GROSVENOR SQUARE,
Tuesday, February 7, 1781.

This moment Dick Burney tells me how ill you are. My dear, how shall I keep from stepping into a post-chaise, and sousing through Gascoyne Lane to look after you? Complicated as my engagements are, between business and flash, I shall certainly serve you so, if you do not make haste and be well.

Yesterday I had a conversazione. Mrs. Montagu was brilliant in diamonds, solid in judgment, critical in talk. Sophy smiled, Piozzi sung, Pepys panted with admiration, Johnson was good-humoured, Lord John Clinton attentive, Dr. Bowdler lame, and my master not asleep. Mrs. Ord looked elegant, Lady Rothes dainty, Mrs. Davenant dapper, and Sir Philip's curls were all blown about by the wind. Mrs. Byron rejoices that her Admiral and I agree so well; the way to his heart is connoisseurship it seems, and for a background and contours, who comes up to Mrs. Thrale, you know.

Captain Fuller flashes away among us. How that boy loves rough merriment! the people all seem to keep out of his way for fear.

Aunt Cotton died firmly persuaded that Mrs. Davenant was a natural, and that I wrote her letters for her—how odd!

Many people said she was the prettiest woman

in the room last night,—and that is as odd; Augusta Byron, and Sophy Streatfield, and Mrs. Henchcliffe being present.

Mrs. Montagu talked to me about you for an hour t'other day, and said she was amazed that so delicate a girl could write so boisterous a book.

Loveliest Burney, be as well as ever you can, pray do. When you are with me, I think I love you from habit; when you are from me, I fancy distance endears you: be that as it may, your own father can alone love you better, or wish you better, or desire the sight of you more sincerely than does your

H. L. T.

Dr. Johnson is very good and very *clubbable*, but Sir R. Jebb is quite a scourge to me: Who now would believe that I cannot make a friend of that man, but am forced to fly to Dr. Pepys for comfort? He is so haughty, so impracticable a creature; and yet I esteem and honour him, though I cannot make him feel any thing towards me but desire of *downing*, &c.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

Nov. 2 [1781].

Dear Sir,

There was no need to be enraged, because I thought you might easily forget a transaction not at all pleasing to remember; nor no need that I should be enraged if you had indeed forgotten it

—but you was always suspicious in matters of memory. Cummins don't forget it however, as I can tell you more at large. My health is growing very bad to be sure. I will starve still more rigidly for a while, and watch myself carefully; but more than six months will I not bestow upon that subject; you shall not have in me a valetudinary correspondent, who is always writing such letters, that to read the labels tyed on bottles by an apothecary's boy would be more eligible and amusing; nor will I live like Flavia in Law's "Serious Call," who spends half her time and money on herself, with sleeping draughts and waking draughts and cordials and broths. My desire is always to determine against my own gratification, so far as shall be possible for my body to co-operate with my mind, and you will not suspect me of wearing blisters, and living wholly upon vegetables for sport. If that will do, the disorder may be removed; but if health is gone, and gone for ever, we will act as Zachary Pearce the famous bishop of Rochester did, when he lost the wife he loved so—call for one glass to the health of her who is departed, never more to return—and so go quietly back to the usual duties of life, and forbear to mention her again from that time till the last day of it.—Susan is exceedingly honoured, *I* think, by Miss Seward's enquiries, and I would have Susan think so too; the humbler one's heart is, the more one's pride is gratified, if one may use so apparently Irish an expression,

but the meaning of it does not lie deep. They who are too proud to care whether they please or no, lose much delight themselves, and give none to their neighbours. Mrs. Porter is in a bad way, and that makes you melancholy; the visits to Stowhill will this year be more frequent than ever. I am glad Watts's "Improvement of the Mind" is a favourite book among the Lichfield ladies: it is so pious, so wise, so easy a book to read for any person, and so useful, nay necessary, are its precepts to us all, that I never cease recommending it to our young ones. 'Tis *à la portée de chacun* so, yet never vulgar; but Law beats him for wit; and the names are never happy in Watts somehow. I fancy there was no comparison between the scholastick learning of the two writers; but there is prodigious knowledge of the human heart, and perfect acquaintance with common life, in the "Serious Call." You used to say you would not trust me with that author upstairs on the dressing-room shelf, yet I now half wish I had never followed any precepts but his. Our lasses, indeed, might possibly object to the education given her daughters by Law's "Eusebia."

That the ball did so little towards diverting you, I do not wonder: what can a ball do towards diverting any one who has not other hopes and other designs than barely to see people dance, or even to dance himself? They who are entertained *at* the ball are never much amused *by* the ball I believe, yet I love the dance on Queeney's

birth-day and yours, where none but very honest and very praiseworthy passions, if passions they can be called, heighten the mirth and gaiety. It has been thought by many wise folks, that we fritter our pleasures all away by refinement, and when one reads Goldsmith's works, either verse or prose, one fancies that in corrupt life there is more enjoyment—yet *we* should find little solace from ale-house merriment or cottage carousals, whatever *the best wrestler on the green* might do I suppose; mere brandy and brown sugar *liqueur*, like that which Foote presented the Cherokee kings with, and won their hearts from our fine ladies who treated them with Spunge biscuits and Frontiniac. I am glad Queeney and you are to resolve so stoutly, and labour so violently; such a union may make her wiser and you happier, and can give me nothing but delight.

We read a good deal here in your absence, that is, *I* do: it is better we sate all together than in separate rooms; better that I read than not: and better that I should never read what is not fit for the young ones to hear: besides, I am sure they *must* hear that which I read *out* to them, and so one saves the trouble of commanding what one knows will never be obeyed,—I can find no other way as well.

Come home, however, for 'tis dull living without you; Sir Philip and Mr. Selwin call very often, and are exceedingly kind. I see them always with gratitude and pleasure; but as the first has left

us now for a month, come home therefore. You are not happy away, and I fear I shall never be happy again in this world between one thing and another. My health, flesh, and complexion are quite lost, and I shall have a red face if I live, and that will be mighty detestable—a humpback would be less offensive vastly.

This is the time for fading: the year is fading round us, and every day shuts in more dismally than the last did. I never passed so melancholy a summer, though I have passed some that were more painful; privation is indeed supposed to be worse than pain.

Instead of trying the *Sortes Virgilianæ* for our absent friends, we agreed after dinner to-day to ask little Harriet what they were doing now who used to be our common guests at Streatham. Dr. Johnson (says she) is very rich and wise, Sir Philip is drown'd in the water—and Mr. Piozzi is very sick and lame, poor man! What a curious way of deciding! all in her little soft voice. Was not there a custom among the ancients in some country —'tis mentioned in Herodotus, if I remember right—that they took that method of enquiring into futurity from the mouths of infants under three years old?—but I will not swear to the book I have read it in. The Scriptural expression, however, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*, &c., is likely enough to allude to it, if it were once a general practice. In Ireland, where the peasants are mad after play, particularly backgammon, Mr.

Murphy says, they will even, when deprived of the necessaries for continuing so favourite a game, cut the turf in a clean spot of green swerd, and make it into tables for that amusement, setting a little baby boy behind the hedge to call their throws for them, and supply with his unconscious decisions the place of box and dice.

Adieu, dear Sir, and be as cheerful as you can this gloomy season. I see nobody happy hereabouts but the Burneys; they love each other with uncommon warmth of family affection, and are beloved by the world as much as if their fondness were less concentrated. The Captain has got a fifty gun ship now, and we are all *so* rejoiced. Once more farewel, and do not forget Streatham nor its inhabitants, who are all much yours—and most so of all

Your faithful Servant,
H. L. THRALE.

We never name Mr. Newton of Lichfield: I hope neither he nor his fine China begin to break yet—of other friends there the accounts get very bad to be sure.

To Fanny Burney

[STREATHAM],
Sunday, Nov. 22, 1781

SWEET BURNEY,

Your little scrap to my Tit was the most delightful thing I ever read—better than forty letters.

Now that my stomach is lightened by doses of emetic tartar, and my heart pacified by a Paris letter, I can try for flash again—at least rake up some old embers.

Our Journal would be yet emptier and more compressible than yours, for not a living thing have we seen since Crutchley left us late on Monday night, till Seward visited us yester noon ; but the poor lady of the manor tried all she could to keep from tormenting the only creature in her reach with ill-humour ; and for that creature's comfort the house will now soon be full.

Sir Richard Jebb has done Peggy Pitches so much good, she is enchanted with him. A physician can sometimes parry the scythe of death, but has no power over the sand in the hour-glass.

How happy Mr. Crisp is in his Fannikin ! Take care of yourself for all our sakes, and do not go to church such weather as this ; but keep the fear of the churchyard before your eyes.

I am glad the little book or volume [" Cecilia "] goes on ; my notion is that I shall cry myself blind over the conclusion—it runs in my head—'tis so excessively pathetic. I saw your sweet father on Thursday, but he came alone.

" Not a ship on the ocean," says my last letter from Ashbourne [Dr. Johnson], " goes out with more good wishes than that which carries the fate of Burney. I love," continues he, " all of the race which I do know, and some that I do not, and love them for loving each other."

Of this consanguineous fondness I have had little experience myself, but I consider it as one of the lenitives of life. It has, however, this deficiency—that it is never found where distress is mutual. He who has less than enough has nothing to spare. Prosperous people only love each other. May you and I, my love, be ever prosperous !

Miss Kitty may well think this the surprisingest world that ever was. I have long been of her mind. Cavendish Square is the place appointed for me to perform in next winter, I perceive by everybody ; and though matters look cloudy just at present, I find we are to hope for a " little bit of Burney " in the spring. Did I say that bright thing before ?

Somebody told me (but not your father) that the Opera singers would not be likely to get any money out of Sheridan this year. " Why, that fellow grows fat," says I, " like Heliogabalus, upon the tongues of nightingales." Did I tell you that bright thing before ? Ah, Burney ! if I was well I would make a little fun yet, but I cannot get well. The next time I see Sir Richard I will coax him to let me go in the cold bath again, I am so low, so lamentable !

I am, however, most sincerely yours in all affection,

H. L. T.

Respects to Mr. Crisp.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

STREATHAM, *June* 14 [1782].

DEAR SIR,

I am glad you confess yourself peevish, for confession must precede amendment. Do not study to be more unhappy than you are, and if you can eat and sleep well, do not be frighted, for there can be no real danger. Are you acquainted with Dr. Lee, the master of Baliol College? And are you not delighted with his gayety of manners and youthful vivacity now that he is eighty-six years old? I never heard a more perfect or excellent pun than his, when some one told him how in a late dispute among the Privy Counsellors, the Lord Chancellor struck the table with such violence that he split it: No, no, no, replied the Master dryly, I can hardly persuade myself that *he split* the *Table*, though I believe *he divided the Board*. Will you send me any thing better from Oxford than this? for there must be no more fastidiousness now; no more refusing to laugh at a good quibble, when you so loudly profess the want of amusement and the necessity of diversion. How the people of this age do cry for rattles is indeed little to its credit, for knowledge is diffused most certainly, if not increased, and that ought to stand instead of perpetual variety one would think. Apropos to general improvement: I was reading the "Spectator" to Sophy while my maid papered my curls yester-morning, it was the 3d vol. 217,

where the man complains of an indelicate mistress, who said on some occasion that her stomach ach'd, and lamented how her teeth had got a seed stuck between them.—The woman that dressed me was so astonished at this grossness, though common enough in Addison's time one sees, that she cried out, Well Madam! surely that could never have been *a lady* who used expressions like those.

I much wonder whether this refinement has spread all over the Continent, or whether 'tis confined to our own island: when we were in France we could form little judgment, as our time was passed chiefly among English; yet I recollect that one fine lady, who entertained us very splendidly, put her mouth to the tea-pot, and blew in the spout when it did not pour freely. My maid Peggy would not have touched the tea after such an operation. Was it convenient, and agreeable, and wise, and fine, I should like to see the world *beyond sea* very much;

> But fate has fast bound her
> With Styx nine times round her.

So your friend must look on the waves at Brighthelmstone without breathing a wish to cross them.

Mean time let us be as *merry* as reading Burton upon "Melancholy" will make us. You bid me study that book in your absence, and now, What have I found? Why, I have found, or fancied,

that he has been cruelly plundered: that Milton's first idea of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" were suggested by the verses at the beginning; that Savage's Speech of Suicide in the "Wanderer" grew up out of a passage you probably remember towards the 216th page; that Swift's Tale of the Woman that holds water in her mouth, to regain her husband's love by silence, had its source in the same farrago; and that there is an odd similitude between my Lord's trick upon Sly the Tinker, in Shakespear's "Taming of the Shrew," and some stuff I have been reading in Burton.

And now, Dear Sir, be as comfortable as you can, and do not dun me for that kindness which has never been withheld, only because it is cold weather and you want employment; but be gentle and tranquil like Dr. Adams, or gay and flashy like Dr. Lee, and then—— what then? Why then you will deserve Miss Adams's good will, and Miss More's esteem, added to the humble service and attentive regard of your ever equally

Faithful, &c.

H. L. Thrale.

Sir Richard asks after you with very tender care indeed: what would you have of us all that you cannot command? He is among those who would do any thing in the world to oblige you.

Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

Thursday, [*April*] 25, 1782.

Upon my honour then, my dear, I have not said half of what my heart is full. The Delviles, since I wrote last, efface everything else. When I read the lady's character in my own dressing-room, I catch myself looking at my mother's picture every moment ; yours is so like her in many things. Hobson and Simkins are Borough men, and I am confident they were both canvassed last year ; they are not representations of life, they are the life itself. Even Mr. Briggs, *caricato* as he certainly is, won all my esteem by his scene with Don Puffendorff, whose misty magnitude was never shown so despicably dropsical before. I was happy to see Briggs have the better of him.

But poor Henrietta ! some harm will come to her, I see, and break my heart, for she has won it strangely ; her innocent love of a character superior in rank and fortune to herself, shows her taste and proves her merit ; while the delicacy of her mind, the diffidence arising from—— I am just ready to order the coach, in short, and fetch her away to Streatham, from that most inimitably painted mother, whom Queeney does so detest. But she has seized Lady Honoria for her favourite, and her saying how Cecilia's fortune should patch up the old fortifications there about West Wood enchanted us both.

Oh, lovely Burney ! *ma che talento mai !* I will

trust myself no further on a subject that makes me wild.

And so your father don't come to-day; and so I must send Daniel back with your sweet manuscript in the morning. Very well, he shall take the greatest care of it. I had never one in my possession that I valued half so much before. Seward only have I said anything about it to.

Do you believe that I am steadily set to read "Marmontel" all over again, to see whether, in variety of character, comprehension of genius, and elegance of touch, he at all equals this third volume of my Burney's?

Here comes your father. What can make him so late? Adieu, ever more and more your admirer! Can I be more your friend?

H. L. T.

Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

Tuesday Night.

My eyes red with reading and crying, I stop every moment to kiss the book and to wish it was my Burney! 'Tis the sweetest book, the most interesting, the most engaging. Oh! it beats every other book, even your own other vols., for "Evelina" was a baby to it.

Dear charming creature! do I stop every six pages to exclaim; and my Tit is no less delighted than I; she is run out of the room for a moment.

But young Delvile is come and Queeney returned, so I leave the pen and seize the MSS.

Such a novel! Indeed, I am seriously and sensibly touched by it, and am proud of her friendship who so knows the human heart. May mine long bear the inspection of so penetrating, so discriminating an eye!

This letter is written by scraps and patches, but every scrap is admiration, and every patch thanks you for the pleasure I have received. I will say no more; I cannot say half I think with regard to praise.

I am sorry Pacchierotti does not come on Thursday, for on Thursday se'nnight I am engaged. In your book his praises will be recorded, and by it they will be diffused.

The Belfields are my joy, my delight. Poor Henrietta! how I adore her! How easily was her sweet heart engaged by that noble friend! But I have not finished my book yet; 'tis late now, and I pant for morning. Nothing but hoarseness made me leave off at all.

My most ingenious, my most admirable friend, adieu! If I had more virtue than *Cecilia*, I should half fear the censures of such an insight into the deepest recesses of the mind. Since I have read this volume, I have seriously thanked Heaven that all the litter of mine was in sight; none hoarded in holes, nor hastily stuffed into closets. You have long known the worst of your admiring

H. L. T.

Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson

Nov. 31, 1783.

I am very ill indeed, my dear Sir, but our pretty Sophy being now so *near* at least to recovery my fingers are grown more steady, and I will endeavour to write without agitation once again. She has had a severe illness ; so severe, that few men however wise or strong would have endured it with greater resolution. The sullen courage you speak of in the letter dated twenty is certainly not pleasing ; but the more one lives on to see softness seduced, flexibility despised, and gentleness insulted, the more contentedly one bears with a disposition so different from one's own. There is a good deal of body too in all this ; a good deal of this temper I mean seems connected with corporeal causes, and cephalick disorders seem to haunt people of that turn more than others ; who though they may be tortured by various maladies, are seldom afflicted with those dreadful headachs that enchain the faculties, as if by magick, and render complaint nearly as difficult as recovery. Sophia will return to her study of arithmetick in proper time ; it appears to me a study well suited to one who has a distaste of fiction because it resembles falsehood. If truth can be found in any sublunary science, numbers will produce it, for to that at last almost all other sciences refer for confirmation.

Were the mother as likely to enjoy life and health again as the daughter is, we would perhaps

struggle to obtain the advantage of Mr. Herschel's acquaintance. This famous astronomer, whose discoveries, or whose hope of future discoveries begin to fill the mouths of our Bath talkers, and I fancy my friend Mrs. Lewis could introduce me, though God knows she as well as myself have nearer concerns to puzzle about than lunar ones; and indeed when I think upon the desperate state of oblivion into which are fallen the wonders promised by Helvetius, and that *selenography* which I believe procured him a pension too from Lewis the Fourteenth, my heart recoils at the name of astronomical discoveries, and trembles lest the star of King George should in some future age be consigned to keep company with the firmament of John Sobieski. In the mean time who can help smiling at the expressions used by Derham, Ray, and others, who write on these subjects, and fancy they are exalting the glory of God when they tell us, in what a *workmanlike* manner he has made the world, &c.? You hate all notion of national character I know, yet 'tis difficult to deny that none but a *true Briton* could think in such a manner when praising his Creator; as it is impossible not to discern the Frenchman in archbishop Fénelon's latter conversations when he says, *Si j'aurai l'honneur de voir Dieu je ne manquerai guères de lui reccommander bien l'âme du* Roi de France. I have not his life with me here, but have a notion those are the very words.

You will not suspect me of wanting respect for

these worthies : what christian lives who can refuse his reverence to Cambray's piety or Derham's learning ? but you will have me write, and I am miserably ill, very peevish and very perverse, and 'twere better you quarrelled with me about departed philosophers, than that you accused me of wanting good-will towards you, of whom no person living can think more highly than does,

Dear Sir,
Your faithful humble Servant,
H. L. THRALE.

The Girls will write soon and tell you all our conjectures.

Mrs. Thrale to Fanny Burney

BATH, *Tuesday, March* 23, 1784.

You were a dear creature to write so soon and so sweetly ; but we shall never meet. I see that clearly, and have seen it long. My going to London would be a dreadful expense, and bring on a thousand enquiries and inconveniences—visits to Johnson and from Cator : and where must I live for the time, too ? Oh, I have desired nothing else since you wrote ; but all is impossibility. Why would you ever flatter me that you might, may be, come to Bath ? I saw the unlikelihood even then, and my retired life will not induce your friends to permit your coming hither now. I fancy even my own young ladies will leave me, and I sincerely think they will be perfectly right

so to do, as the world they wish to shine in is quite excluded by my style of living.

Bath flash they properly enough despise, and London flash I cannot attend them in. More chapters of the Bible, or more volumes of the Roman and English histories, would fatigue their ears—for their lungs have not yet suffered. I have, however, read to them the Bible from beginning to end, the Roman and English histories, Milton, Shakspere, Pope, and Young's works from head to heel; Warton and Johnson's criticisms on the Poets; besides a complete system of dramatic writing; and classical—I mean English classics—they are most perfectly acquainted with. Such works of Voltaire, too, as were not dangerous, we have worked at; Rollin *des Belles-Lettres*, and a hundred more.

But my best powers are past, and I think I must look them a lady to supply my deficiency to attend them if they should like a jaunt next summer or so; for I will not quit Bath. The waters and physicians of this place are all my comfort, and I often think I never shall again leave the spot.

Ah, Burney! you little know the suffering, and, I will add, the patient suffering of your

H. L. T.[1]

[1] The above letter is endorsed as follows in the handwriting of Madame d'Arblay.

"Many letters of a subsequent date to this letter, of March 14, 1784 [*sic*], I have utterly, for cogent reasons (cogent and conscientious), destroyed. Following, with this so long

Mrs. Piozzi to Dr. Johnson

BATH, *June* 30 [1784].

MY DEAR SIR,

The enclosed is a circular letter which I have sent to all the guardians, but our friendship demands somewhat more; it requires that I should beg your pardon for concealing from you a connexion which you must have heard of by many, but I suppose never believed. Indeed, my dear Sir, it was concealed only to save us both needless pain; I could not have borne to reject that counsel it would have killed me to take, and I only tell it you now because all is irrevocably settled and out of your power to prevent. I will say however, that the dread of your disapprobation has given me some anxious moments, and though perhaps I am become by many privations the most independent woman in the world, I feel as if acting without a parent's consent till you write kindly to

Your faithful servant.

dearest friend, the simple, but unrivalled, golden rule, I would only preserve such as evince her conflicts, her misery, and her sufferings, mental and corporeal, to exonerate her from the banal reproach of yielding unresisting to her passions. Her fault and grievous misfortune was, not combating them in their origin; not flying even from their menace. How have I loved her! with what affection, what gratitude, what admiration, and what affliction!—*February* 12, 1825." [Mrs. Barrett's note.]

To Mrs. Whalley

ANTWERP,
Thursday, March 1, 1787.

DEAR MADAM,

When I rose to leave Brussels, this morning, I found
That my lips could not utter one audible sound,
For the cold, which had seized on my voice and my hearing,
Had made me a figure not fit for appearing.
So as blind men by music their passion express,
And soothe by soft notes them they mean to address,
We dumb folks, tormented as much as our betters,
Must persecute those that love us with our letters:
Tell of Matsys the blacksmith and Martin du Vos,
And Rubens' surprising Descent from the Cross:
Of Beerenbrock's friendship, that gained us admission
To Van Laucker's pictures—a sweet exhibition;
But no connoisseurship poor I could display,
My vanity muffled, my voice in decay:
While my husband, impatient, would needs make me write
To dear Mrs. Whalley, and send it tonight—
Fill my letter with kindest respects for his friend,
And cover with compliments from beginning to end—
To our Fanny, so famed for her powerful finger,
And fair Countess Cleri, our principal singer—

To Count Antonelli, whom lately we saw,
And the lady who soon will be laid in the straw.
I heard not a word, though, of little Florina,
But all of Miss Lockhart, our sweet Contessina.
As my list was so long, then, so straitened my time,
I thought 'twould be easiest to write it in rhyme ;
For though Mr. Hayley may think himself clever
To canter in couplets for ever and ever,
I think there is nobody else but what knows
Bad verses are much sooner writ than good prose.
For example, in rhyme, one may name a few more,
And praise pretty Stuart, and Rochfort, and Gore,
The Ryans and Mansfields, and Mr. O'Shee,
In short, every one of the kind coterie ;
Nor forget to protest how I long for a meeting
With the amiable Bretons and good Mrs. Keating.
No more, my loved friend, but good night and adieu,
With our truest respect for your husband and you ;
And, trust me, I verily think that you 'll not see
A friend more sincere that your Hester Lynch Piozzi.

To Miss Weston

EDINBURGH, *July* 10, 1789.

And so you will not write again—no, *that* you will not, Dear Miss Weston,—with all your mock Humility !—till Mrs. Piozzi answers the last letter, and begs another. Well ! so she does then : I never was good at *pouting* when a Miss ; and after

fifteen years are gone, one should know the value of Life better than to *pout* any part of it away. Write me a pretty Letter then directly, like a good girl, and tell me all the News. The emptier London is, the more figure a little News will make, as a short Woman shows best at Ranelagh when there is not much company. Echoes are best heard too when there are few People to break the sound, you know, so let the Travelling Trunks, Hat Boxes, and Imperials that pass over Westminster Bridge every Day at this time of the Year, be no excuse for your not writing. We have had a good Journey, and the Weather cannot be finer ; a Northern Latitude is charming in July, and the long Days here at Edinburgh delightful—but no Days are long enough to admire its Situation or new Buildings, the symmetrical beauties of which last quite exceed my expectations, while the Romantic Magnificence of the first is such as gives no notion at all of the other. So I like Scotland vastly ; and as we have Engagements for every Day, one should be ungrateful not to like the Scotch too. But for that my heart was always equally disposed. . . . I am much flattered with finding my Book read here, and everybody talks about " Zeluco," but I hope no one more than myself, or with more true esteem of its Author. . . .

To Miss Weston

LIVERPOOL,
Saturday, Aug. 22 [1789].

So dear Miss Weston, and her Hanover Square friends, have shared all the delights that *Water* can give this hot weather, while

> A River or a Sea
> Was to us a Dish of Tea, &c.

Meantime I do not tell you 'twas judiciously managed to run from Lago Maggiore to Loch Lomond, and finish with the Cumberland Meres, any more than it would be wisely done to put Milton into the hands of a young beginner ; and when good taste was obtained, lay Thomson's charming " Seasons " on the desk ; then make your Pupil close his studies with Waller's poem on the Summer Islands.

Beg of Major Barry to make my peace with his countrymen ; some one told me the other day they were offended at a passage in ye " Journey through Italy," and I should be very sorry on one side my head, and much flattered on the other, *that they should think it worth their while*. . . .

We spent a sweet day at Drumphillin, near Glasgow, in consequence of Dr. Moore's attentive kindness, and even from that charming spot continued to see the majestic mountain which attracted all my admiration, and which still keeps possession of my heart. I took *my* last leave of it from the Duke of Hamilton's Summer House, but at a

distance of seventy or eighty miles it may be discerned. If you ask me what single object has most impressed my mind in this journey of 800 miles round the Island, I shall reply BEN LOMOND. . . .

If I promised you an account of Glasgow, I did a foolish thing; what account can one give of a very fine, old-fashioned, regularly-built, continental-looking town?—full as Naples, yet solemn as Ferrara: after Glasgow too, everything looks so little.

I think Mr. Piozzi must write the account of *this* town, he is all day upon the Docks, and all night at the Theatre; both are crowded, yet both are *clean*: the streets embellished with showy shops all day, and lighted up like Oxford Road all night; a Harbour full of ships, a chearful, opulent, commodious city. Have you had enough for a dose? and will you give all our compliments to all our friends, and will you love my husband and Cecilia?

To Miss Weston

Friday, Feb. 11, 1791.

My dear Miss Weston must be among the very first to whom I give an Acct. of our safe arrival at a comfortable House, corner of Saville Row, Alfred Street. We . . . ran hither in one day from Reading, but I found a strange Giddiness in my Head that was not allay'd by the noisy concourse of young Gamesters, Rakes, &c., at York House, where we staid till this Lodging was empty: and

here I have good Air and good Water, and good Company—and at last—*good Nights*; so that I mean to be among the merriest immediately. The Place is full, and the pretty girls kind, as my Master says, so you must write pretty eloquent letters to hold his heart fast. . . .

Miss Hotham's accounts of our sweet Siddons are better than common, so when things are at worst they mend, you see. Mr. Kemble's illness, gain'd only by shining too brightly, and wasting the Oyl in the Lamp, while here at Bath, is recovered by now I hope, and his spirits properly recruited. . . .

Cecilia was fourteen years old three days ago, and all the folks say how she is grown, &c. . . .

To Miss Weston

Rectory House, Nuneham,
Saturday, Aug. 6 [1791].

I promised my dear Miss Weston a long Letter from sweet Siddons's fairy Habitation, but had not an Idea of finding as elegant a Thing as it is. England can boast no happier Situation; a Hill scattered over with fragrance makes the Stand for our lovely little Cottage, while Isis rolls at his foot, and Oxford terminates our view. Ld. Harcourt's rich Wood covers a rising Ground that conceals the flat Country on the Left, and leaves no Spot unoccupied by cultivated, and I may say peculiar Beauty. How I should love to range these Walks

with my own dear Streatham Coterie !—but now it is all broken up. The Marquis and my Master with M. Buchetti left us this Morning in search of Sublimer Scenes : I have given them a Tour into Wales—Cecilia and myself sit and look here for their Return—*that is for my Husband's*—unless Miss Owen's summons or Signal of distress lures me to Shrewsbury, where I could wait for *him* and be nearer. They will reach Worcester tonight, and visit Hagley tomorrow I trow. Never did mortal Nymph speed her *polish'd* Arrow more *surely* than has our Harriet done : never did stricken Deer struggle more ineffectually against the Shaft which has fix'd itself firm in his Heart than does her noble Lover. He has however no Mind, I fancy, to give up without an Effort—but no one better knows than I do the difficulty, up to impossibility, of such an Operation. *She* too feels, and feels sincerely, I 'm sure ; these are the true lasting Passions ; when a serpentine Walk leads they *know not whither* : for in Love, as in Taste, I see

> He best succeeds who pleasingly *confounds* ;
> Surprizes, varies, and *conceals* the *Bounds*.

Console and sooth her, *do*, my charming Friend she will find these five or six Weeks as many Years—but by then she will have her Admirer at the Hot Wells, where he may drink the Water to advantage. He is already much altered in countenance, but *so* interesting ! . . .

There is nothing like living near a Nobleman's house for making a *Democrate* of one: here has been such a deal of Ceremony and Diddle Daddle to get these Letters frank'd as would make a plain Body mad—and I see not that you or Harriet will get them either quicker or cheaper for all the Ado we have made at last, but now I am out of Parliament myself I will beg no more Free Cost directions. Oh! would you believe the Gypsies have told Truth to Marquis Trotti? They said he would have a great Influx of Money soon—*Yellow Boys* you know they called them: and he said what stuff that was, because his Fortune could not easily admit of Increase, as it was already an entail'd Estate—and all his expectations well known to himself. But a few days ago a Letter from Italy informed him of unclaimed Dividends found in the Bank of Genoa, which might be his for asking. *He will not go over* to ask for them however; but sent his Father word he was indifferent about the Matter—he had enough &c.—he is of Aspasia's mind entirely—

Love be our Wealth, and our Distinction Virtue.

His income can be in no Danger though, do what he will: at least a very considerable one, of which I am glad: he is a deserving Character indeed, and will, I hope, lose very little by his Sentiments of Dignity and Sensibility of Heart. Let our Harriet read all this, I had no room for another Word in that I sent *her*. How beautiful a bit of

writing did she send me upon leaving Streatham! I wish, when her Hand 's *in*, some clever verses would but drop from it: tell her I say so: this is Inspiration's favourite Hour. How pleased it would make me if I were but addressed in them! Her Talents have really made a glorious Conquest, and she ought to cherish them. I long for the sight of her dear pale Ink, that I do. . . .

It appears so strange and so shocking to put up my Letter without speaking of Miss Seward, that I can't bear it; nobody has such a notion of her Talents as I have, though all the world has talked so loudly about them. Her Mental and indeed her Personal Charms, when I last saw them, united the three grand Characteristics of Female Excellence to very great Perfection: I mean Majesty, Vivacity, and Sweetness.

Well! you may speak as ill of Bath as you please, but I wish I was there, and never look at old White Horse Hill, which one sees from the Terrace, without sighing to pass it on the Road—but Fate calls to Shrewsbury—and thither I shall hie me on the 20 of this Month. And now remember Missey, that to kindle and keep up a Man's Love so as to make him ardent enough for the *overleaping* Objections, is the true duty of prudent Friendship; not to make him *talk* of those *very Objections* which we know already, and which will only strengthen by talking of. So God bless you all, and love your

H. L. P.

To Miss Weston

[*Aug.* 1791.]

I know not, my dear Girl, whether the great Dictionary is a good incentive to Love or no, but if agreeable letters produce it the Gypsie prophecy towards *you* will not surely be long in completing. I never read any Book so interesting or entertaining, therefore recommend no Novels, but write again, and that directly. . . .

Dear, lovely, sweet Siddons is better; and at last tolerably reconciled to parting with me for the relief of those whose anguish is of the soul, while hers, I thank God, is confined wholly to the beautiful clay that fits it so neatly with its truly well suited inclosure. . . .

And now my beloved friends do not think me wanting in my duty about our Lorenzini; I never was remiss in bringing the subject forward, never lost sight on 't but from thinking it prudent so to do; as Adriana says,

> It was a Copy of our Conference,
> Alone it was the subject of our Theme,
> In company I often glanc'd at it,
> Still did I place it in his constant view.

The *verses* I dispatched after them to Denbigh, which they cannot yet have reached, a proof I never shrunk one instant from the cause, and as this moment has brought me a *cold*, *stiff* letter from him, dated Shrewsbury,—this moment shall carry one back from me to tell him *I think it such.*

Meantime you know I never said that it was likely he should marry in this manner unless from irresistible impulse; the obstacles I *know* to be *all but*, if not *wholly* insurmountable. Only my notion of his *Love* is stronger than yours can be, who have seen so little of him; and proportionable power will vanquish proportionable, or rather disproportionable resistance. If Gunpowder *enough* is put under Mont Blanc—*it must give way*. Such was my reasoning always, and I still think it just. The last evening he spent here, crying over Piozzi's Song, and applying every word on 't, as I could see, mentally to his own situation; looking all the while like *very Death*, and never sleeping in the night, but employing himself in penning his Journal forsooth, which consisted only of tender sallies at the sight of the Bath Road; at thoughts of leaving Streatham, &c.; till his very heart was breaking with passion, apparently increased instead of diminished by absence. Vindicate my hopes and even *belief* that he will relieve his anguish, when become totally insupportable, by a union which every *natural* friend he has in the world will certainly disapprove. As to the letters which he brought down to the Library in his hand the morning we left Streatham, they were letters he had himself *written*, not *received*: I suppose to say that he was resolved on remaining another year in England. They had, as he confes't, cost him even *tortures* to write them. O my sweet Sophy! I know most fatally from experience every pang

that poor young man is feeling; yet I was an *Englishwoman*! of a country where no such aristocratic notions are acknowledged as taint his hotter soil; and yet three years did I languish in agony, absence, and lingering expectation. "If fortune," said he to me one day, (dancing to the tune in his own head, for I had not mentioned fortune,) "If fortune were the only obstacle, I hate it, I despise it; I have been offered fortunes enough, the first in Lombardy I may say; but I abhor them all." "One may see," was the reply, "you have no such mean notions." "My Father pleased himself," said he, "I made no objections. If *people were generous!* but——" "But what, my Lord?" quoth I. He put his handkerchief to his eyes, and changed the conversation. Who would have pressed him further to tell that which I know already, and which no power on earth can cure; the difference of Birth, Religion, and Country? If however he has but *love enough*, all those three things which would drown him if he tried to swim across, may be *leaped* over; and I, who have taken the jump before him, never cease to show him how well I feel myself after it. For the rest, he is now in bad company for our cause to be sure; but I shall have another sight of him at Shrewsbury, before he gets to Bath, and will send thither all the particulars. . . .

To Miss Weston

STREATHAM PARK,
Saturday, Oct. 15 [1791].

My dear Miss Weston's letter contain'd more agreeable descriptions of the places I love, than of the people. I must hear better accounts of our sweet Harriet before my heart is easy, yet I doubt not her command over a passion which no longer appears to disturb the tranquillity of her once half-frantic Admirer; who told my Master, in confidence *no*,—was his expression to me,—but in common discourse, that if he married a woman of inferior birth, such were his *peculiar* circumstances, that exactly one half of his estates would be forfeited. He remains constantly with us, but the world seems a blank to him: he takes no pleasure, as I can observe, and either feels no pain, or pretends to feel none. If he ever does marry an Italian lady he will be a very miserable man however, from being haunted by our Harriet's form, adorned with talents, and radiant with excellence. Should he renew his attachment to her, and sacrifice half his fortune to his love, every child she brings will seemingly reproach him for lessening an ancient patrimony.—*Such is life.*

Mrs. Siddons is at Harrogate, and, we hope, mending. Poor Sir Charles Hotham is going to change the *Scene*, I hear: his state of existence, so far as relates to this world, draws to an end. Yet though the Physicians send him to Bath, he

and Lady Dorothy resolve, it seems, to see the *new* Drury Lane Hay Market before their curtain falls. Who says there is no ruling passion? It appears to me that *any* passion, or even inclination, nursed up carefully, will rule the rest, tho' naturally larger and stronger; as our little Flo lords it over the out-door dogs, merely on the strength of being his Mistress' *favourite*.

Chevalier Pindemonte has written me a long letter. He sends particular compliments to all our Friends and Coterie almost, and says a vast deal about dear Siddons. "What," cries Mr. Buchetti, "does he say of Helena Williams?" "Oh! not a word," replied I, "men never speak at all of the woman whom they really like." A painter would have enjoyed Marquis Trotti's countenance at this conversation. Meantime our little democratic friend is not doing a foolish thing at last by leaving England, I do believe. Such is the advantage of exchange between London and Orleans, that they say the very difference may make it worth her while; nor is that position a weak one, if it be true that a British Guinea is worth thirty-two French Shillings; and it was a man just arrived who told it me for a fact. . . .

Della Crusca has married a Woman of elegant person and address, and who will bring him perhaps £500 o' year, with an unblemished character, as people tell me: the husband meantime will congratulate himself charmingly on his own *superiority*, no small pleasure to some minds;

and the world will always be on his side in every dispute, tho' he had neither character *nor* fortune when they met. His family, I hear, are very angry.

The Kembles get money apace. Mr. Chappelow says he is sure that the Pit *alone* pays every night's expence, and people in general seem highly satisfied. *Here 's* a long letter from your ever affectionate

H. L. P.

To Miss Weston

CROWN INN, DENBIGH,
Monday, Oct. 1 [1792].

I write myself now, kindest Miss Weston, and I write with steadier fingers. The cough has yielded to repeated bleedings, and she mends as rapidly as she grew ill. Dr. Haygarth it was who threw me in that agony, by pronouncing Cecilia in serious danger from the blood spit up, which *he* said came from the lungs; and never did twenty Guineas purchase as much affliction at one dose, I do believe, as those we gave to him. Dear Mr. Moore, an agreeable Practitioner settled here as Accoucheur, Surgeon, &c., who cured Sally Siddons, had repeatedly assured me that it was *not* from the lungs. . . . Her quick recovery gives great reason to think *him* right; and he *so* smiles, and *so* rejoyces, yet insists on my telling nobody that he differs from Dr. Haygarth, who is a man of very high reputation, and in earnest

a very pleasing Physician—skilful too I dare say —and fully perswaded of his own opinion, which is supported by Science, as the other's by Experience.

Dear Cecy's recovery will, if complete, prove the old adage that an Ounce of Mother is worth a Pound of Clergy; meaning that good Common Sense, or *Mother Wit* as we call it, beats learning out of doors.

So may it prove! I will now pluck up courage and write to Sir Lucas myself. Doctor Haygarth recommended us to take Cecilia to a warmer climate, and that *instantly*: at the same time he said she must not be *hurried*, or even suffered to *talk* much, or move. *Naples* was the first place that occurred: but how should we get to *Naples*? Thro' France? They would refuse Passports, perhaps *hurry* her into *worse apartments* than these we are in: a prison, and present her with the sight of heads streaming with blood. Thro' Germany? Through marching armies into miserable towns, where want of horses to get forward would detain us in a climate worse than that of Great Britain; a German inn to escape catching cold at is a good joke to be sure. 'Tis a residence for Pigs only, not delicate Damsels, sure.

Let it be *Lisbon* then! Very well, Lisbon be it; but now do not you open your lips, or black one bit of paper with this intelligence, for if she really ails nothing—which Mr. Moore says will very soon appear to be the case—all these phantoms vanish, and poor Mr. Piozzi and I are *not* to be driven

forcibly, expensively, dangerously, and suddenly from all our comforts, all our friends, present enjoyments, and future projects. The little *Belvedere* may yet go forward at Funnen Vaino, and we may yet be merry with *you* in many a beautiful spot, but none like the *Vale of Llwydd.* My health, tho' horribly shaken, *may* tye up again, and I may kiss my pretty black Cock and Hen (that I forgot to thank you for,) at poor old Streatham Park. They are of the Polish breed; we will call them the King and Queen of Poland, there will never be any other, I fancy. . . .

Jacob's dangerous sore throat and fever has been a great addition to my agony, but he will live, poor fellow, I thank God; and so the favourite horses got lamed with neglect while he was sick, and Phillis came to evil, and all went *consistently.* I expect my poor Husband to get a fit of the gout every day, and that would *do* for me. I should remind myself of the Welch Parson's letter saying

"Dear Sir, as I was passing the heights of Snowdon last week, with Mrs. Jones behind me, I got in much distress, for night came on, my horse tired, and my Wife fell in labour. . . ."

Of Sally Siddons I say, like as Imogen says of Pisanio, "thou art all the comfort the gods will diet me with." Her mother's recovery is however one solid and certain felicity to us all. I do thank God for that: she is an invaluable Creature.

To Miss Weston

STREATHAM PARK,
Wensday 21 [*Nov.* 1792].

My dear Miss Weston's kind letter came safe to my hand, 'tis the last I shall read with that signature. Do pray tell me whether your Brother knows how matters go, and when he found it out. Does good Mamma set out at the same time you do? Yes, I dare say. Give my truest regards to charming Mr. Whalley, and your *real* cousin, his amiable Lady, and tell my Harriet Lee how I expect her, and long to see her, and tell all my tales of sorrow and of joy about poor Cecilia, whose kind and wise Physician came here out of pure good will two days ago, and signed a *good Bill of Health* for all the family,—honest Jacob included; and said moreover that sweet Siddons would recover in due time, and that time not distant. He is one of *us* her adorers. . . .

How happy Mr. Pennington must be in Mrs. Tryon's admiration of his Sophia's fine qualities. These are the bright moments, the lucid spots of life, which those who never marry never see. Mr. Whalley's is really a lucky house, I seldom have seen it without a courting scene upon the foreground. Tell him, (if you can remember,) that his democratic friend, Count Andriani, asked for him the other day, tho' I perfectly recollect his turning quite pale with passion while they disputed about politics. Meantime the French are ex-

pected hourly at Rome, and at Loretto, to pay their troops with the rich spoils of Palaces and Churches. Some Italian noblemen dined here last week, and actually wept with reflexions upon past terror and apprehended injuries. Excellenza Pisani in particular, at whose throat, and at those of his little girls, ten and eleven years old, they held knives and pikes for the space of *four* hours, surrounding his coach as he came away, and loading him with the bitterest curses; adding Rogue and Rascal, etc., till his daughters' Gouvernante, in perpetual fits, seem'd wholly dead from fright, and his Steward came out in a spotted fever with the agony. I never heard anything so dreadful. Little Lady Caterina says she thought they would kill Papa every minute. Remember that Pisani is one of the first families in Europe, and that his person ought to have been sacred as Ambassador from one of the first Republics in it.

Poor Marquis Spinola has the same tale to tell; but he had lived twenty years in France, and acquired kindness enough for the Nation to be sorry for *them*. Well! we will now think of nothing but private happiness, and rejoice that 'tis still within our reach. May you, my kind friend, long remain a proof and pattern of it, prays your truly affectionate and obliged

H. L. Piozzi.

To Mrs. Pennington

At Dr. Whalley's, Crescent, Bath

STREATHAM PARK, *Dec.* 27, 1792.

My charming friend (for such, I trust, you will ever be, let names go how they may) was very unjust in supposing she could be forgotten anywhere, least of all at Streatham Park, where she will long be missed and mourned. Mrs. Greathead and our dear Lees have spent two days with us this Christmas, no more—and of those days one had no comfort, as politics engrossed the whole conversation, and that in a way I understand nothing at all of, because it was entirely whether this lord or t'other lord, this minister or t'other minister deserves or does not deserve confidence from the king and people. I am therefore left, after long discussions never comprehended, and, to say truth, very little interesting to me, somewhat more confounded, much more stunned, and not a bit better informed, than I was last week. What I know best is that you are married and happy, and have made your husband and friends so. Your own truest well-wishers are all delighted at the change in your circumstances, and Mr. Jones and Mr Chappelow drank your health yesterday, with kind good will indeed. My master has taken your dear letter to study in the carriage as he goes to London; the girls wear the favours with fondness, and everybody is thinking how sweet it is of you to remember us all so. Harriet says you look very

well, and I say so does she. Mrs. Siddons was never equally charming, I am told; but the boxes are very empty when she acts. Horace is dying. Our Italians seem less in fear than they were of the French going to Rome, yet my heart tells me they will go, and I see not how they can do better than pay with plunder an army set on foot by professed regicides, with intent to trample on everything sacred :—

> low were laid
> The reverend crozier and the holy mitre ;
> Peasants trod upon the neck of nobles, &c.

I find these sentiments were applauded by the people at "Jane Shore" the other day, almost to uproar, and when Kemble said, in reply to the Duke, who asks why we should not new mould the State? "Curse on the innovating hand attempts it!"—a thunder of approbation shewed that the general sentiments of Britons now run parallel to those of Mr. Rowe at other times, when party ran pretty high too. But I will detain you no longer. Farewell! and continue to love me, who really have for your amiable husband a most sincere esteem: make him never forget her is so much yours as H. L. P.

With regard to coming to Bath, my dear soul, it must be very late indeed, if we do come, seeing, fair lady, that we have not a shilling of money, and that is a sad hindrance to a friskly spirit.

To Mrs. Pennington [1792].[1]

My dearest Mrs. Pennington might have remembered that I said I would direct no more letters to her till the name was changed. I wrote the morning of your marriage, and hardly expected you could mind a word any one said to you that day but your husband, to whom pray make my sincerest good wishes acceptable, as no one can more truly wish you joy from their heart. The girls were delighted with the favours and bride-cake, which last they swallowed in their eagerness, instead of keeping it to dream upon—a trick they say they never heard of. Anonymous letters did I never receive, or think it possible in your case, but perhaps everybody that is married has anonymous letters. I remember being twice amused with that April foolery. My master will write himself, he says, but I am trying to make you amends for my long silence by a popular ballad I wrote for the use of association dinners, &c. Mr. Piozzi has put his name down among the Streathamites. Turn over and you 'll find the verses :—

A LOYAL BALLAD

To the tune of " Ten times a day hoop her barrel " in " The Devil to Pay "

Whilst, with murder imbrued,
Our mad neighbours in blood
Delight their own country to drench,

[1] Erroneously dated 1805 in the *Journal*, etc., of Th. S. Whalley.

Let us British boys sing,
" Drink a health to the king,
And ne'er be such fools as the French, &c.
And ne'er be such fools as the French."

If enamoured they are
Of young Freedom the fair,
Sure they know not the trim of their wench,
But think Liberty's joy
Is " sink, burn, and destroy ! "
Why our fleets may do that for the French, &c.
Why our fleets may do that for the French.

What bold Edwards begun,
Both the father and son,
From their monarch the sceptre to wrench,
The comical elves
Will now do for themselves,
And imprison their king of the French, &c.
And imprison their king of the French.

When our brethren and we
Quarrel'd over our tea,
And Lord North graced the Treasury Bench,
Fomenting vexations,
They injur'd both nations,
Such traitors and rogues were the French, &c.
Such treacherous rogues were the French.

Now dank Holland they swear
They will render so bare,
They 'll not leave her an eel nor a trench ;
But long live Billy Pitt,
And we hope they 'll be bit.
While none fish in foul streams but the French, &c.
While none fish in foul streams but the French.

But if this way they drag,
Rebellion's 'curst flag,
In our channel their colours will quench ;

Lest the poison should spread,
Soon lop off the snake's head,
Nor stand still till we 're stung by the French, &c.
Nor stand still till we 're stung by the French.

From the towers so high
Our red cross it shall fly,
And around it will dig a big trench ;
All will arm in the cause
Of religion and laws,
And down with these levelling French, &c.
And down with these levelling French.

To Mrs. Pennington

STREATHAM PARK THEN,
Mar. 20, 1793.

Here we are again, and in new characters somehow, or else old ones revived. Last Saturday, at Mr. Jones's, Piozzi received a Billet from Miss Thrale, requesting to see him next morning. He attended her summons while I went to Church, and heard, at my return, her intention of coming to see me the day following, *at my own hour*, with her Sisters. I appointed 12, and she promised for the other Ladies and herself. My Master saw only the *eldest*, but our good hospitable Landlord, rejoicing in this new and strange event, (which gives every one's curiosity an air of *tender interest* that it would be ill manners in me to repress,) spread his finest tablecloths, and invited them to *breakfast at ten*, an hour they appear'd eagerly to catch at, and coming to their appointment, sate down with us

and Mr. Rich'd Greatheed, and Baron Dillon, who came in by chance ; while each, *thinking* I trust on everything else in the world, agreed to *converse* only on popular topics. Susanna felt nervous, however, and left the room with Cecy for a moment, but Miss Thrale and I stood our ground admirably, and I beg'd Mr. Rich[d] Greatheed to tell dear Siddons how well (like Rosalind,) I had *counterfeited*. Night carried me to *her* Benefit, and Company crowded round all day, so that my spirits were so oddly kept afloat that, upon my honest word, I have never been *sleepy* since Saturday that Piozzi received the letter, and this is Wednesday morning.

Well ! we returned the visit, and invited the Ladies here on Easter Monday to *Dinner*. All the Town would buy *tickets* I 'm sure, with pleasure, could they procure 'em, and pass through danger itself willingly, *to see the sight*. I told my Master it would have been best to take the little Theatre, and give them the whole show at once. Nothing does revolt me so as that true British spirit of tearing out every private transaction for public discussion and amusement : it makes one's feelings appear affected if indulged, and annihilated if they are repressed. But this luxurious Nation longs to learn what cannot be known, and see what its own very light renders incapable of being clearly discerned. For when they *have* stared in our *faces* on such an occasion, how much do they find out of our *hearts* ?

Farewell ! and do write to me : I can talk of

nothing but *this*, and will talk no more about that, so Adieu, and love your true friend

H. L. Piozzi.

Easter Tuesday.

My dear Mrs. Pennington has often seen people talked into misery, 'tis the way now to talk me into happiness ; but I am content to be happy the way other people please, and I am sure *they are right*. I returned the visit I told you of next day, and they all din'd and supped here last *Monday*,—oh ! yesterday—after an interval of fourteen days, in which I saw nothing of them. However all is vastly well, they are contented to take me up, as they set me down, without alledging a reason ; and I am contented to be taken and left by *them* without reasoning on the matter at all. We had a brilliant day, with feast, and dance, and song, and broke not up till four o'clock in the morning. Our elastic house pulled out to embrace *them*, and the Hamiltons, kind and sweet, the Greatheeds, Miss Owen, dear old Mr. Jones, and all the Siddons family. One of my delights was to see Cecilia dancing with Mr. Richard Greatheed, who, when he felt her pulse at Guy's Cliffe, I feared would never have made Allemande with her. Everybody seemed pleased however, and we all *were* pleased. Our acquaintance will henceforth be theirs, and things will shake naturally into their proper places. Nothing could exceed the kindness of our common friends, except my sensibility of it. The

Girls seemed less shy of Mr. Piozzi than of me, comical enough! But he is *so* good, and *so* attentive to them! How you would love him! And public concerns were prohibited the conversation, so Mr. Greatheed was quite charming. The dear Broadheads could not come, their uncle is dead, and has disinherited them, leaving £50,000 to a little Currier's boy, who as I say will jump out of his *skin* for joy I suppose, while they fret as I once did on a like occasion. . . .

To the Rev. Daniel Lysons

DENBIGH, *Sunday Night*,
February 15, 1795.

DEAR MR. LYSONS,

A thousand thanks for your letter, and literary intelligence. I suspect the tragedy &c.[1] will prove a second Chattertonism; this is an age of imposture. What became of the philosopher in St. Martin's Lane, who advertised a while ago that he gave life and motion to stone figures, that moved and turned in every direction at the word of command? I never saw it in the paper but once; 'twas a curious advertisement. So is Mr. Kemble's *in another way*; he has proved himself no conjuror, sure, to get into such a scrape, but Alexander and Statira will pull him out, I suppose.[2]

[1] The celebrated Ireland forgeries.

[2] He was obliged to make a public apology for indecorous behaviour to a lady, afterwards his sister-in-law.

Poor dear Mrs. Siddons is never well long together, always *some* torment, body or mind, or both. Are people only *sick* in London (by the way), or do they *die*? not of any one contagious disorder, but of various maladies. I suspect there is disposition to mortality in the town, sure enough, for never did I read of so many deaths together; these violent changes from cold to heat, and from heat to cold, occasion a great deal of it.

For the Princess of Wales, I think little about her just now, and still less about that horrid Mr Brothers; but it will be a dreadful thing to see the King and Queen of Spain setting out upon *their* travels, as appears by no means improbable, if the French are in possession of Pampeluna. The Spaniards can fight nothing but *bulls*; we shall have that royal family unroosted, I verily believe, and in a few months too. The capture of Holland will seem a light thing in comparison of so heavy a calamity when it comes to pass, for all the riches of Mexico will then drop into the wrong scale.

> But we will not be over-exquisite
> To scan the fashion of uncertain evils,

as Milton says; but keep out famine by liberality, and contagion by cleanliness, as long as ever we can; loving our gallant seamen meantime, and rewarding them with all the honours and profits old England has to bestow.

I should like to read your Fast sermon; we shall have a very good one *here*, for among other

comforts Denbigh possesses that of an excellent preacher and reader. Pray tell how the day is observed in London and its environs : I shall be curious to hear ; and do assure you with the greatest sincerity that letters from you and your brother are most desirable treats. He is cruel, though, and keeps close *Mum*. Pray are the Greatheeds in town ? what do they say of Mr. Kemble's conduct ? and what of their countryman Shakespeare's extraordinary resuscitation ? It seems to me a sort of tub to the whale, a thing to catch attention, and detain it from other matters. When we see Mr. Lloyd of Wickwor, whom we here justly call the philosopher, I shall find what *he* thinks of the discovery. Give my kindest regards to your very amiable neighbours, Miss Pettiwards ; they must take *double* care of their mother now, if possible, for all the people past a certain age seem to be dropping off.

'Tis very wicked in me to send you these sixpennyworths of interrogations every time I feel my ignorance of what passes in the world painful to myself, or disgraceful among those whom I wish to entertain ; but whoever is rich will be borrowed from : so Adieu ! and write soon, and accept my master's and Cecilia's best compliments from, dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

H. L. Piozzi.

To Mrs. Pennington

STREATHAM PARK, *June* 1, 1797.

MY DEAR MRS. PENNINGTON,

I feel your good-natured expressions very sensibly, and so does our poor dear Master; he is grown a sad invalid, always having the Gout, and crying out with pain. But the sick people *live*, whilst the well people *dye*, you know; so sings the sublime Mrs. Piozzi in her "Journey to Italy," and so experience teaches.

Your Brother came here one morning last week, and brought some gentlemen with him to see the pictures in our Library. He is not altered in person, perhaps not in *anything*. I think character never changes; the Acorn becomes an Oak which is very little like an Acorn to be sure, but it never becomes an Ash: and if Mrs. Mostyn is, as Miss Lees say, the same Cecilia, I may add that that same Cecilia never cared a pin for me nor my husband,—and cares not now. I have not done caring for her however; somebody says she is at Bristol, tell me if 'tis for health or pleasure she goes there, and how she looks, . . . and whether her husband is with her or no, and how they live together. I can trust your information and your friendship. . . .

I have been to the Exhibition. Lawrence is the Painter of the day; and to prove that he can shine equally in describing a *rising* and a fallen Angel, he has seated *Mrs. Siddons at Lucifer's feet*. There

is a little thing of somebody's, I forget who, representing Cassandra predicting the fall of Troy, which few admire as I do, but it bears the true marks of genius and of taste. The next best thing I saw was a drawing of Pellegrini's, and no inelegant or worthless portrait of the Queen for la Duchesse de Wirtemberg.

Mr. Piozzi's state of health has hindered my waiting upon Lady Derby, but we met her in a Phaeton one day, and she stopt and spoke very prettily and kindly indeed. All the world seems pleased with *her* good fortune, and Lord Deerhurst's, to whom an old, distant relation has left no less than £80,000. It came at a nice moment to comfort them, for Lady Pitches, who I perhaps never told you, dropt down dead as she was stirring the fire, about six or eight weeks ago, and the breaking up of that house was a sad thing upon all her children. . . .

When we go hence, Miss Thrales will enliven the spot, they are to succeed us in old Streatham Park. Whenever a loose half-crown lies in our pockets, it pays a mile's Postage towards the Hot Wells, you may assure yourself. Mrs. Siddons will see you first however, for Sally says her plan is to meet her husband and children at Mr. Whalley's, when she has been at two or three places alone. The little Baby Cecilia is the most extraordinary of all living babies ; many have I seen, but none of such premature intellect. It is a wonderful infant, seriously. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

BRYNBELLA, *Wensday, July* 17, 1799.

Your letter, dearest Mrs. Pennington, is like yourself, full of true friendship, honest loyalty and sound criticism. Freedom from *prejudices*, as principles are called now o' days, we must not come to you for. . . . I do believe you were right in that *unjustifiable* conjecture of yours concerning the death of those Deputies at Rastadt. . . . But *Retrospect* of past ages can shew no perfidy beyond *that*, if so it should prove upon investigation. The Archduke now seems to act with his hands untied, and co-operates with Suwarrow in everything, yet I suspect something behind the curtain still. The Emperor is willing enough to see Italy freed, but does not want Louis Dixhuit on his throne again, I suppose ; whereas the Russians and English are trying to accomplish y^{t} purpose with all their might, and no lasting peace can be obtained but by his restoration. We shall see how 'twill end.

You are droll indeed in your account of the New " Canterbury Tales," I have not read them yet. . . . When Romances first were written they went by the name of Incredibilities ; but people soon found out that Fiction looks best the more she endeavour to resemble Truth. It grows however a mighty tedious thing, after a certain age, to keep filling one's head with flitting dreams so, turning one's mind into a Magic Lanthorn for Shadows and

Ombres Chinoises to pass over. If incredibilities are desirable, *we* can hear enough of Mr. and Mrs. Mostyn. As that Lady told you at some place that Mrs. *Moyston*, as she called her, made all the talk,—*and so she does, God knows.*

Well, any nonsense but *dishonourable* nonsense, *disgraceful* folly such as Honoria Gubbins has exhibited. You know I always said she looked like a Bacchante Girl, but she admired nothing except *Siddons* I remember. In good time. Dear, charming Siddons! How triumphantly must she have looked in the first and last scene of "Pizarro"! And what a happy contrast Sheridan has made between her artificial character, and Cora's natural one! Yet I cannot seriously approve of a *Heroic* Tragedy in *prose*. *Domestic* Tragedy, George Barnwell, or the Gamester, or the Stranger, would lose the interest they now gain in our hearts, if they spoke any but colloquial and domestic language. Poetry is made on purpose to adorn the lofty sentiments of Rolla, and Cora's song is the sweetest thing in the whole play,—only because 'tis *verse*.

Poor Cora! She is not of *your* mind, that love is of no consequence compared with a hundred other things; and that she should have completely no *other* idea present to *her* mind, makes her so natural, so interesting, and so adorable. What is stranger than love itself, and love is strange enough too,—is that one should never have done admiring that *selfish* passion when represented in works of fancy. I remember an old Alderman of London,

who, when there was loud talk of invasion 20 years ago or more, said among a dozen people once at my house : " Well ! I care not, for my part, if the *Island* was *devoured* to-morrow, so as my wife and child were safe, and I had enough to keep them with." This *patriotic* sentiment met with no approbation at all from an old Alderman in real life ; yet this is the sentiment that Cora expresses all through five acts, and not only her auditors in the Pit and Boxes, but Rolla himself likes her the better for it. So you see Fiction may resemble Truth in some things, while if Truth resembles Fiction we hiss her out of doors.

Poor dear old Mr. Jones is very bad, and like to die, or has been like to die, and I am very sorry indeed ; for though there 's but little poetry or criticism about old Mr. Jones, he is a good friend and a valuable member of society, and wishes well to my Master and to me. . . .

Mrs. Siddons goes to Edinburgh, I hear, but by what you say of Sally, I trust she cannot be of the party. Miss Thrale is in Scotland, and will have the pleasure of seeing her, as I saw her at Bath. No letter have I ever received from Marlbro' Street but one, and *that* was from the Master of the Mansion. . . .

The little boy comes next week, next month I mean, with Davies.

To Mrs. Pennington

BRYNBELLA, *Aug.* 21, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter is like yourself, wise and kind, and I am willing to join in your wish for early meeting this year, but not for an early winter. Oh! little do you *Towns folk* know how prejudicial is this weather to Country Farmers, Labourers, &c. The Shoemaker and his apprentice at Bristol make so many more boots and clogs, and some Bath Chairmen get a few shillings extra: but *my* honest neighbours have but just barely *bread*, in the *strictest* sense; mere bread, and that made of Barley too, for their families, during such winters as this cruel summer will infallibly produce. Mr. Piozzi and I shall scarce be suffered to get thro' the Village, they will so cling and cry round us, and beg we will stay another month, another week, &c.

When the Gardener came yesterday, scratching his head, and saying there would be no wall-fruit this year, I could hardly answer him civilly; but I *did* say, "For God's sake, think about the hay and corn, and hang the fine people and their wall-fruit." The produce of whole meadows may be seen swimming down our over-flooded River to the sea this moment, and carrying with it the subsistence of hundreds of innocents.

May this fine Expedition make amends for all! It *will*, if peace and abatement of necessary exertion be its consequences. English pride will be bravely

swelled, that 's certain, if we can thus give law and order and happiness to Europe. Are such blessings within hope? People *say* they are almost within *grasp*. Meanwhile let us try to live that we may see these good days. Mrs. Bagot, the Bishop's wife's death has affected my spirits strangely. I got a pain in my stomach on the *instant* Allen told me the news, and it has never wholly left me since. She din'd here in high spirits on our Wedding day, three weeks ago, and expired on Saturday morning. The Ton men and Ton women bear these things without concern, and prove that fashion can do more than philosophy towards hardening one's heart, but my nervous fingers shake while I write about it. . . .

To divert thought I took up the " Canterbury Tales " which Mr. Gillon had just brought me. Harriet's management of the *pretty Mamma* making the man miserable so unconsciously is very good, and in *this age*, scarcely violates probability. The other story is too romantic, and the ghost part too in-artificial, one sees it could be only Carey. For love, it abounds but little with *that*, I think. Julia keeps her passion very quiet ; one is most interested about Agnes and Carey.

Real life meanwhile affords stranger occurrences than any novel can show. Mr. Conant, the London Magistrate, told Mr. Gillon, who told us, the following tale not a fortnight ago. Some little London shopkeepers sent out their girl of eleven years old, with a baby 8 *months* old in her arms,

upon some errand, I forget what, but no further off than the short street's end. A young woman, genteely dress'd, stop't the girl, and beg'd her to cross over and ask the price of a gay coloured handkerchief hanging at a window, promising that she would hold the infant till his sister returned. When she came back however, both little boy and young woman were vanish'd ; and the girl ran back, half wild, to her parents, and told the story. They flew from the Counter in search of the thief, and desperate with rage and terror, exhibited to the neighbours a certainty that the shop might be easily plundered while their distress employed every thought. Accordingly the *man* returning home at night, found his poor dwelling robbed of many valuable articles, while the girl, to whom all this confusion was owing, had hid herself under the bed for fear of a beating, and the father was persuaded *she* too was lost. The mother, parting from her husband, who had wandered over six parishes, swore she would never see home again without her baby, and remained out the whole day and the whole night in search. Morning found her, much exhausted, at a chandler's shop door in Edgeware Road, and when it opened she went in to buy a bit of cheese. A little wench went in with her, and the mistress of the house, seeing her anguish, kindly asked the cause. " I 've lost my child," said she, " my dear little boy." " My mammy has found one," says the wench, " and don't know what to do with it." They ran together

to a Green-stall, and found Baby safe in that woman's possession, who said a young *gentlewoman* had pretended to buy Sellery of her, and while she went backwards to look for some, threw down the infant, and was seen no more. Mr. Conant was applied to, and found a cause for all. The well-dress'd lady was a Chamber-maid, who had a child for whose maintenance she was paid, altho' it died during the first week ; and the father had resolved, that hapless day, to see his son. Molly had nothing for it but to borrow one, and when the purpose was served, to rid her hands on 't, and no Novel can bring to a reader's fancy more perfect distress than these poor parents suffered. Their girl, however, who lay concealed till mother and brother returned, told her tale so well that a subscription was raised, and all went better than before in the little shop in Silver Street, Carnaby Market.

So instead of our best com^{s} to Dr. and Mrs. Randolph, instead of affec^{te} regards to Mr. Pennington, or Bon Mots of our little John Salusbury, here 's a page from y^{e} Romance of Real Life, unadorned by your true friend H. L. Piozzi, and for this you will pay 8*d.*

To Rev. Reynold Davies

BATH, *Wednesday, Jan.* 22, 1800.

I am sorrier for *you*, dear Mr. Davies, than I am for Mr. Macnamara—he seems to have suffer'd little or nothing, but you must tell me the particulars another Time.

I am sorry for myself too. We shall all have a sad loss. . . . My best Wishes wait on the Ladies. Did you expect? . . . Dear little Boy! he has worked hard, you say. I am very glad: my Heart tells me he will be a valuable Creature with God's Blessing and your kind Care. Let him dance by all means; and let me see him all that a fond Mother can fancy—and a true Friend wish. My last Letter went by favour of Miss Lee, and there was a note of enquiry in that; I enclose another now for Mrs. P. O'Bryan, who has doubtless been tenderly remember'd: nobody's Uncle disinherits them except Poor Mrs. Piozzi's. . . . I will hope better from a Man of Business like our Neighbour. . . . *My* Sir Thomas was a Country Gentleman; They have not—even when equally rich—the same familiarity with Money as has a Man of the Town bred to a Profession: nor the same Notion of making equitable Disposition of their Effects at parting.

John Salusbury will, I hope, be an active Member of the State, he has been so early called to; . . . I *hope* England and he will have reciprocal Reason to love each other always: and to that End we will imbue him with the best Principles of Integrity and Honour, the largest Portion of Knowledge we can get into him. Little phials must be filled with a Tunning-dish however; else much Learning is spilt by the way, and the fragile Bottle is in danger of bursting. I did not know that as well when I was 25 years old as I know it now . . . but I began teaching before I had learned, and writing before

I had read enough—always—and that made me do both so ill. You are better qualified in as much as you have more Experience. Lord Landsdowne is exceptionally good-natured and gives me Envelopes every day. Mr. Piozzi encloses you a Cheque with Apologies for the long Date. . . . We are sorry to see the poor little Rogue has been Ill, but you were Kind in settling all without shaking the nerves of your

Obliged and faithful
H. L. Piozzi.

When my Master threw down your last Letter . . . and cried out "bad News!" It struck to my Heart. I never thought Mr. Macnamara: he had lived so long I was in hopes Death had forgotten him. When we come to Town next November the little Preceptress shall see I do not forget her. Mrs. Pennington begs that Salusbury will remember her love for him, and *I* beg that you will write directly and say this Letter came safe.

To Mrs. Pennington

Brynbella, *Saturday, May* 16 [1800].

My last letter was a wretch: how could you, dearest Friend, commend it so? If I remember anything about it, it was low, cold, and flat. The usage I had received sunk my nerves down, they were not irritated. Use of the cold bath, meant to strengthen them, threw me all out in *nettle-stings*. And *now*, for crowning of all, my poor

Master's torment, villainous Gout, has, as you once observed of Mr. Pennington's, watched the due time, and thrown in *his* assistance to the fair Ladies' cause. Their cause is cold though, and notwithstanding our defenders cannot bring matters to a decision yet, they give us hopes that little will be lost, except the arrears, worth, Mr. Gillon says, £1000. He has behaved divinely to be sure, and deserves all your generous praises of him. Nobody applauds Miss Thrale's proceedings I think. Mrs. Holman and you inveigh *loudest* against her, and it *was* a cruel thing to fly so upon that estate, which her Father would never have left *her at all*, had I not so requested him, because I thought it was unfair that, from accumulation of fortune after they lost *him*, the youngest daughter would be richer than the eldest: but I meant her to have Crowmarsh after my death, and so he meant it too. Well! one has always heard some nonsense how two negatives make an affirmative, so I suppose in *Law*, when a man gives a thing twice over, it turns out *no gift at all*. Mr. Thrale tried *three* times to secure his Oxfordshire property for me, and if I miss it at last, no blame can attach to *him*. The flaw was in the *Settlement* you see, and the Will confirms the *Settlement*, so God knows how 'twill end at last. The Mr. Butler employed on our side has a high character in his profession as *Chamber Council*, &c. Being a Roman Catholic he cannot reach the honours of his calling, but rests contented with the profits. . . .

Here 's much to do with *Hate* and more with *Love*, as Juliet says in Shakespear. Apropos to Hatred, I am delighted that we know the author of "De Montfort": she must be a fine creature, and will excite no small share of the hatred she describes. I *felt* it was a woman's writing, no man makes female characters *respectable*—no man of the present day I mean, they only make them *lovely*. We must except *Dr. Moore*: his Mrs. Barnett and his Laura Sedlitz are all that women ought to *wish* to be.

Don't you admire at my sitting here to criticize Plays and Novels, like Miss Seward, while my Husband is lame, my fortune is crippled, and my favourite dog has but *three legs*?

Farewell, dear Friend, . . . 'tis five o'clock in the morning, I was up at *four*, shall call the men and maids at six, send away this scrawl at seven, jump into the bath at 8, breakfast at 9, work at the book till 1, walk till 3, have dined by 4, fret over Gillon's dispatches and Piozzi's misery all the rest of the day: a pretty biographical sketch of your literally poor

H. L. P.

To Dr. Whalley

No. 25 Leicester Fields,
Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1800.

My dear Sir,

The kind mention you make of us in the letter our lovely Siddons shewed us three days ago, produces you this intrusion, chiefly to ask what can

have inspired any countryman of mine to debase his profession and birthplace by an endeavour to traduce that admirable creature, Hannah More ?

> I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
> And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride,

says Milton, and they want now to stop the warning voice which yet would save us, if men would permit.

So valuable a writer, and writings so well timed as hers, will not be found again ; and if their vile detractions should injure her feeble health, the mischief done would be past my computation. Let me not detain you from supporting her cause a single moment, but when a leisure hour does come, give me the benefit by saying a kind word of "Retrospection,"[1] which could not quite look over her merits without a line, and scarce has that close-clapt Epitome more than a line to bestow on characters more prominent, though not more useful than her own.

We publish on New Year's Day, and Stockdale seems in high glee when he looks at his order-book. My own nerves are not so strong ; and I see many a sneering face, even before anything but the attempt can have provoked them to sneer.

Adieu my dear Sir, and do me all the good you can ; and believe me ever yours and Mrs. Whalley's obliged and faithful servant,

H. L. Piozzi.

[1] Mrs. Thrale's "Review of Important Events."

Accept 10,000 respects and compliments from my good husband.

To Mrs. Pennington

BRYNBELLA, *April* 5, 1801.

My dear Mrs. Pennington will be delighted to hear that we are got home safe, in spite of my *nose*, which is restor'd to its original size, colour, and shape: having transmitted all ill humour to the shoulder, more fit for carriage of a burden so oppressive.

Some heaviness has reached my heart tho', and some weight hangs on my spirits. The first intelligence that struck us upon the very confines of our Principality, smiling as it seemed with hope of future plenty, was the death of a friend. You have, I am sure, heard me mention as an agreeable acquaintance and excellent preacher, a Mr. John Mostyn, Curate of Denbigh. He *perished*, it seems, poor soul, in the hard weather which succeeded that day on which we dined with Dr. Randolph, walking home from his Father's house to his own: —perish'd of *cold*! and was buried in drifts of snow,—

> How sunk his soul!
> What black despair! What horrors fill'd his heart,
> When round him night resistless closing fast,
> And o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
> Lay'd him on the wild Heath a stiffen'd corpse,
> Far from the track and blest abode of Man.
> [THOMPSON.]

These verses have almost haunted me ever since ; so has his figure, chearful and gay, not 38 years old. But we will change the subject and the side of paper.

Tell dearest Siddons, when you see her, that *her* picture was the first thing we unpacked, and *her* handkerchief the finest thing I appeared in while at Bath : the *only* thing I shall wear here till—till what ? I can't answer that question.

Poor Harriet Lee's lowness, the day we dined at Mrs. Stratton's, affected everybody present, and she ran home, unable to bear company. Can you tell whether the conversation of approving, nay *admiring* friends, has been yet able to reconcile her to past vexations, for they scarce can be accounted calamities.

We have contagion even at St. Asaph, but 'tis occasioned by want of wholesome food. When the plenty I still predict shall once arrive, there will be no distemper but *ill-humour*. Meanwhile some cause for *that* does doubtless exist, when the ports are filled with grain, and the poor perishing of hunger. Our Bishop, detained in London by illness, is much wanted, and we came home too late to save our old favourite labourer, Edward Davies, who expired eight hours before our arrival ; saying that if we made haste he *yet* should live, because we should send him something *nice* from our own *plates*, as we did when he was sick once before. When *such* things present themselves to one's mind, how vain must be the hope of Re-

viewers and Critics to draw it on their empty abuse! I would there were no worse afflictions to lament than those created by buzzers and stingers like *them*. Nevertheless *pray* tell me how Hannah More supports *her* torrent of scurrility. She was a kind soul, and came to see us for five minutes before we got into the Chaise at Laura Place, looking very well, thank God! apparently not worse for her long illness and confinement. Her sister is *too* right tho' concerning the general distress for *victuals*. . . .

I carry this letter with me to S. Asaph Cathedral, Easter Sunday, and put it in the Post Office there after service. The Ladies at Llangollen enquired much for you. They have more news and more stories than one could dream of. Their *best* however is concerning their own old Maid Mary, from whose character one would think Sophia Lee had pourtray'd that of Connor in her tale of the Two Emilys. Mary, seeing her Ladies' eyes fix'd, one fine night lately, upon the stars, said to Miss Ponsonby, "Ah! Madam, you once showed me a fine sight in the heavens, the Belt of *O'Bryan*; but I suppose we shall see it no more now, since the *Union*." To this nothing, sure, can be added.

To Mrs. Pennington

BRYNBELLA, *June* 3, 1801.

. . . I do assure you that between your own house and this no greater anxiety has been felt for

Mr. Whalley; he is our very true friend, and we have sense enough to know it. He is so much Miss Hannah More's friend that I am convinced of his fretting at Sir Abraham Elton's officiousness. Will you have *proof* how wrong those things are? I am frequently asked after celebrated characters when we return home to so remote a neighbourhood as this is: and to the questions asked about these exemplary Ladies I made such replies as a friend is expected to make. Some of our neighbours, however, within these three months, have had a fancy to take in a Bath newspaper, and "Oh!" says one now, and "Ah, ah!" says another, "why you never told *us*, Mrs. Piozzi, concerning this *paper war* between Miss Mores and Mr. What 's his name! As good as you say they are, those who live in the world see spots in the sun, we find," &c. &c. Now would it not have been better far to have left these dear creatures round Brynbella nothing to talk about but the *going off* of Lord Kirkwall's marriage with Miss Ormsby, the *coming on* of Mr. Piozzi's gout, just at Laburnum season, the hopes of famous news from Egypt, and, blessed be God, the near certainty of immense crops to feed our poor, and damaged rice from India to feed our pigs? Would it not have been better? But we will talk of something else, if you please.

The trunk is not come, but coming, and it was kind in you to let me know how I might look after it. I had no thought of its taking such a voyage. The comical preference, shown in your letter, of a

trunk to a Lady, is *more* than classical. In Homer's time they preferred a tripod to the fairest: when the tripod was chas'd, though, and the damsel a slave.

I have had a civil letter from Miss Thrale now. She is retired to a friend's Country Seat, I understand. . . . The noise and racket of London was grown painful to her, and she longed for sight and smell of green fields. I wrote her word that if chance should bring you and her together, it would be very pleasant to you both, who have many ideas, and many expressions too, in common. I would the love of H. L. P. lived in her heart as in yours, but of *that*, as Sciolto says, "*as of a gem long lost, think we no more.*"

Do you recollect that agreeable morning dear Mr. Whalley gave us at Laura Place this Spring? and how he talked of the River Euphrates, and said it would be one day *literally* dried up for the Jews' return? And do you remember what you said, after he was gone, upon the subject? and how I exclaimed "Why, you are talking just like Miss Thrale"? Well! and I begin—since he open'd my own mind,—to think that it *may* be so; ay, and without contradiction of your humourous asperity against the talkers and hearers either. Beg of Mr. Whalley, when he is better, and can amuse himself with such stuff, to look in Plutarch's "Life of Lucullus," 'tis an early life, first volume, I think, and if my memory fails me not, he will find something like a confirmation of his own

opinion,—and of yours. Now please to observe that I have no Plutarch *here*, nor have seen one since I saw *you*. In such an act of mere reminiscence, therefore, the mind may be mistaken, but my heart tells me that Lucullus perceived some property in the River Euphrates,—some quality rather, which would (he observed) make it fordable upon a future day, altho' so deep when he was wishing to pass over. All this seventy years before our Saviour's appearance in the flesh.

I am always ready you know for a bit of *old Stilton*, as Dr. Johnson called profane History. "Thou dost love," said he, "my dear, to play the part of Swift's Vanessa, who

> Nam'd the ancient heroes round,
> Explain'd for what they were renown'd, &c.

and I have *as* steadily resisted that mode of conversation ;—now pray, *pray* let 's have no more of it." In obedience to *his commands*, as well remember'd, sure, as Plutarch's Lives, I leave this, and begin saying a good word of Mr. Murphy's book, and feel delighted that you take an interest in it too. There was some danger lest it pleased *me* merely by bringing old scenes to view, but I will trust *your* criticism. The work has more merit as Garrick and he certainly never loved each other, and you may see his praises of the man he celebrates are dictated by *duty*, while those bestowed on Barry spring from *fondness*. I had rather he had been kinder to sweet Siddons. What a thing

it is that her husband cannot at least count and keep together the money she gets for him. That man has, I fear, some rage for speculation; a dangerous game. The prudent people are, for aught I observe, no better calculators than we open-pursed fools, who are cheated out of 20*s.* perhaps, by Bett Lewis the vagrant; while they lose £200 sterling in the management of a puppet-show that *takes fire*, or sink three times as much in a Canal that *lets out water*, or some nonsense.

We have had an earthquake here, as they say, for I felt it not, tho' I am confident I was wide awake at two o'clock Monday morning. Lady Orkney's Canary Birds fell from their perch however, and some of our Denbigh friends fancy they heard a noise. I was thinking about my master's Bavanda, and he was thinking how thirsty the gouty pains made him; so Brynbella was unconscious of the shock.

Buonaparte is supposed to be all this time under the influence of poyson administered three months ago, but I believe *that* as I do the earthquake. Poor Selim's death of the Continental Apoplexy is less improbable; so is young Constantine's hope of restoring the Greek Empire. No matter! Live our own dear King, I care for none of them. Here is his 63d birthday, and the value of his life is increased 63 times since it began. But y^e^ grand climacteric passed over, I count him safe, and would rather have an annuity upon him than on the dangerous dame we fear so justly.

Oh ! I forgot to tell you, Stockdale sends word we have a wicked enemy at *Bath*, who injures the sale of " Retrospection " by spiteful and ingenious censures. *Who is it, I wonder* ! . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

[*Dated, by Mrs. Pennington, July*, 1801.]

Dr. Randolph is a wise man for not caring what these foolish fellows say, and Mrs. Randolph is a sweet lady for caring. On the like principle H. L. P. is a dunce for being *angry*, and dear Pennington is a kind friend for being *enraged* at these odious Critical Reviewers. Those who say my book is merely good for nothing cannot be answer'd. The book says something like that of itself,—but its worthlessness consists in telling people what they knew before, not in telling what is *false*, for that is the charge that offends me. Much of this obloquy might have been avoided certainly, by quoting authorities, but they would add more to the work's weight than its value, were the deed done to-morrow : and I thought it a mere insult to the Public sitting gravely to *inform* them of what they may read in the 7th Period of the 3rd Chapter of the 1st Part of Mosheim's " Ecclesiastical History," edited by our friend Macleane, who, in a note, *confirms* the fact of Tiberius desiring the Roman Senate to deify our Saviour. One would really wonder at a man's assurance who, like our

Critical Reviewer, boldly asserts that " this is an exploded fiction." It stood on the testimony of Eusebius and Tertullian for sixteen centuries before it was disputed : and M. Iselin, with Hase the Hebraist, and numbers more since the year 1700, have proved its truth beyond all power of denial. I saw Miss Case with Macleane's " Mosheim " in her hand when I last visited her. *She* need not be deceived, *she* can enquire and *see* the truth of my position. When I wrote to Mr. Gillon expressing my uneasiness under a charge of ignorance ill-deserved, he said my antagonist was a man of immense abilities, and I had better *let him alone*. But Robson the Bookseller, who sent me down the Review, liked my refutation so well that he requested leave to print my angry letter to *him* on the occasion. I suppose it resembles that I wrote to you, and you will see it in the " Gentleman's Magazine " for July.

I am sorry about Hannah More : these things are, upon the whole, very mortifying, and injure the cause of Religion, Virtue, and sound Literature *too much*, at a moment when enemies to all three are ready and keen to take every possible advantage.

I have a cold and reproachful letter brought me just now from Harriet Lee, accusing my heart of alienation because I made no enquiry concerning *her* state of mind, altho' I saw, she says, that it was an uneasy one. How unreasonable the people all are ! I thought myself acting delicately to make

no enquiries, where nothing was avow'd as capable of being construed into more than a past vexation about the children's sickness. . . . Nothing would be less pleasing to me than the thought of having offended any of the house of Belvidere. Never did I say a slight word, or write a peevish one, about *them*. Never did I fail to express my just admiration of their talents, or even suffer myself to be provoked to more than sorrow—not anger—when I had reason for believing that Robinson was better disposed to y^e^ purchase of my book before his visit to Bath, than he was afterwards.

I hope she will write kindly and make all up. I am ready. If she does not—we must sing Ralph's song in the "Maid of the Mill," I think.

> Nothing 's tough enough to bind her,
> Then agog when once you find her,
> Let her, let her go, let her go, never mind her, &c.

Poor dear pretty Siddons! What has she been doing to her mouth? Picking it, my master says, as I do my fingers, which, he threatens me, are one day to resemble poor Mr. Pennington's toes. But in earnest and true sadness, what can be the matter with her lips? Lips that never were equalled in enunciation of tenderness or sublimity! Lips that spoke so kindly *to* me and *of* me! Dear soul! what can ail her? She dreamed once that all her teeth came out upon the stage I remember; I told her she would go on acting till age had bereft her of them; but God forbid that she should lose

them *now*. Her husband will mend at Bath. . . . Sally's death will be no *loss* to her dear mother, altho' a very poignant affliction without doubt; and Cecilia will be her delight I dare say: but Sally and her Father both will yet last many years I am confident. Shall we have a Bath Winter all together and be comfortable? Or will they pay her, and lure her back to Drury Lane? You must get her mouth in good order, that she may look like my *little* miniature of the *greatest and only unrivalled* female this century last expired has pretended to produce. When her lips close, what good will our ears do open? Yes, yes, they will hear Randolph preach, Piozzi sing, and Pennington converse. Comfort the charming creature all you can tho', and get her into her accustomed beauty, and tell her how she is beloved at pretty Brynbella. . . .

P.S. by Mr. Piozzi.—

. . . Well! I think it time to forget the Critical Review, and Mrs. P. she is persuade to do so. The writer is a poor miserable wretch wanting bread, and so *sufficit*. Belvidere people they can write, but they cannot understand "Retrospection." Next week Little John we expect him at Brynbella. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

BRYNBELLA,
Fryday, Oct. 9, 1801.

Well! my dear, tardy Friend! your letter is come at last, and a nice letter it is. I have one

too this post from Mr. Whalley, so kind! He has had enough to do with his Lady Writers, but he loves both Hannah More and myself, and the least we can do in return is to be *merry*, love our friends, forgive our enemies, forget offenders and offences, and light up our windows for the Peace. The terms are certainly in no sense disgraceful, and since we have all been saying so repeatedly, "Let us heal our own wounds, limit our own expences, and care no longer for Allies who, 'tis sure, care not for *us*"; I pronounce our Ministers fully justified to *this* Country for quitting their post, and leaving every *other* Country to the fate they would none of them resist. While France, having enlarged her own territory beyond the proudest hope of their own proudest Monarch, has prudently bought us off from fighting Europe's battles, with two eminently rich, useful, and valuable Islands: well knowing that an Englishman will always be quiet while his palate is pleased and his pockets full.

The Gold, and Silver, and Rubies, and Rice from Ceylon, sweeten'd by Sugar from Trinidad, will keep Great Britain in perfect good humour, and the Commercial Treaty will keep her employ'd; and in the meantime Alexander and Buonaparte mean to divide the Globe. Such is apparently their project for 1801; how and by what means God Almighty will render it abortive remains to be seen. The internal politics of our United Kingdoms here at home offer a *fair shew*

certainly, for if people are not pleas'd with seeing their ports fill'd with foreign corn, and their stack-yards groaning under the weight of our own harvests, what *will* please them? Not the price of Mutton in the markets I trow; for between the inclosing commons, and *improving* the breed of sheep in Counties where such large animals cannot find pasture, with many other reasons, their flesh will sell for 6*d. an ounce* next year, and we shall have more mouths to feed after the War is over, unless the mortality at Liverpool goes on. Ah! dear Friend! I told you how it would be, and true did I tell you, but no matter,

> For other thoughts mild Heav'n a time ordains,
> And disapproves that care, tho' wise in show,
> That with superfluous burden loads the day;
> And when God sends a chearful hour, refrains.
> Let us light up our windows and be merry. . . .

Little did I dream seven years ago of seeing peace proclaimed between Great Britain and the *Consular State* of France. Little could I *ever* have dreamed that I should see Venice annihilated, Genoa forgotten, Piedmont's Alpine barrier insufficient to keep out invasion, even in the depth of winter; and old Rome, divided against herself, dropping into her enemy's mouth almost without invitation. The world, as it appears, consenting to all this, and even happy to think things have gone no worse. We shall see more yet, but shall not see *all. All!* no, nor *half*. . . .

I wrote Harriet Lee word how much her tale

impress'd me. 'Tis a characteristic of this age, I think, to shew what forcible impression may be made by setting only our *mean* passions to work, avarice, fraud, and fear; instead of generosity, love, and valour. What she has done, however, is very striking; and every one I lend the book to is amazed to find Conrade the murderer of Stralenheim. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

GEORGE ST., MANCHESTER SQUARE,
LONDON, No. 5.
Saturday, 22 *May*, 1802.

My dear Mrs. Pennington will begin to expect *accounts*, and I think the first thing to give account of is our house; wherein was no bed, no fire, and no spit, upon our first arrival. Here, therefore, none save a negative inventory of felicities can be given; but we hire, and we croud, and we dine out, and we endure the inconveniences with the more philosophy as neither house, nor lodgings, nor room even in a Hôtel can be got nearer to Christian dwellings than Cecil Street in y^e^ Strand, where Governor Bruce has housed himself. So much for *residence*.

The cards of visitors and inviters, however, cover our little table, and we have already pass'd three pleasant evenings enough! The first at dear Siddons's, where Lady Percival, Mrs. Barrington, Mrs. FitzHugh, and Mr. Whalley all met us; and we talked of you, and every one talked as you would have wished to hear; but Mrs. Siddons disclaims

letter writing, and says her *friends* must be contented without being her *correspondents*. Among them they perswaded us to push for places at the Theatre next night, where Hermione's statue was exhibited for the last time. I never did see anything so admirable, or so much like a *statue* of our lovely Actress, for it really did *seem stone* ; and the whole was got up with such taste and splendour that I wished for Garrick to witness the magnificence of modern Drury Lane. He would have wonder'd tho' what was become of his old Florizel and Perdita—Barry and Mrs. Cibber. Kemble played Leontes better than I ever saw him do anything since the Regent. Apropos to which, here is the Author ; looking as well as ever, handsome, gay, and brilliant. Mrs. Greatheed alters, and becomes very fat. Their habitation is said to be fixed at Guy's Cliffe, though they are hastening to Paris as I understand, where Helen Maria Williams and the famous Polish hero Koschiusko attract general notice. Buonaparte is consider'd as tott'ring on an unfix'd seat of pow'r ; if he can once convert it into a *throne* it will perhaps stand firmer.

We dined with Miss Thrales yesterday, the party particularly agreeable, and very good *talkers* in it. We women retired to Coffee as the clock struck *nine* ; the men followed in less than an hour, and when tea was taken away at 11 *o'clock*, we came home to sleep, and the rest went out to various parties for y^e^ *evening*.

Fryday was pass'd at Streatham ; little Salusbury seems much improved. I heard his whole class say their lesson, and made observations like those of Mrs. Quickly in the " Merry Wives of Windsor." It was in those characters Susanna and Sophia shone, it seems, at the last Masquerade, dress'd exactly alike, for Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. I wish my rich tenant Mr. Giles would get a wife, that one might with better grace accept his kind invitations to Streatham Park, which never was so fine before. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

No. 5 George St.,
Manchester Square,
Saturday, June 19, 1802.

. . . Cecy Mostyn indeed is no steady intelligencer ; she says but little, and that little speaks good of but few. I could not dig from her one word, good or bad, concerning *you*, tho' Mr. Piozzi and I both mentioned Mrs. Pennington's name on various occasions, while we were *all* enjoying Mr. Giles's kind hospitalities *together* at old Streatham Park.

We are returned now like Stella, to *Small Beer, a Herring, and the Dean*. Apropos to Deans, we have lost our Bishop at S. Asaph, and the learned Dr. Horsley is expected to reign in his stead. But you had rather hear about Mara and Billington. We were at the grand Concert and Benefit when they sung a *Duet* with immoderate applause, toler-

ably impartial too, because Mara shone there with her *low notes*. *Agitata* however went off very coldly, under visible tremors of jealous anxiety. I could have cried almost to see 60 struggling so against six and thirty, with so little hope of success in a professional contest; whilst in all those where merit is not look'd to, *the Filly loses every heat*. Our gay Prince of Wales, gayer than ever, shines the charm of society, his charmer by his side. When his fair cousin *does* appear in public, she retires thence unnoticed except for her beauty and dress, which is always singularly rich and grand. Pretty women are common, as far [as] I observe, who think so very little about them, but I see none strikingly handsome.

Sophia Streatfield is much alter'd in person, but her manner, little changed, secures to her, even yet, *some* pow'rs of fascination. At *her* request, we *visit*; odd enough! But as Callista says, "It is no matter; she can no more betray, nor I be ruin'd. . . ."

Well! I am really haunted by *black shadows*. Men of colour in the rank of gentlemen; a black Lady, cover'd with finery, in the Pit at the Opera, and tawny children playing in the Squares,—the gardens of the Squares I mean,—with their Nurses, afford ample proofs of Hannah More and Mr. Wilberforce's success towards breaking down the *wall of separation*. Oh! how it falls on every side! and spreads its tumbling ruins on the world! leaving all ranks, all customs, all colours, all religions

jumbled together, till like the old craters of an exhausted volcano, Time closes and covers with fallacious green each ancient breach of distinction ; preparing us for the moment when we shall be made *one fold under one Shepherd*, fulfilling the voice of prophecy.

One of the things most worthy of remark here is the surprizing increase in population. You would be astonish'd to see the Town as much *fuller* (in all appearance,) as 'tis larger. On an evening when common people come forth for amusement, all these new streets leading up almost to Hampstead, are thronged like Cheapside upon a busy day : and when I enquire if Westminster and Southwark suffer from the change of fashion, as I deemed it, the reply is that rents never were so high in *both places*, and that fresh outlets are daily forming, and ground contended for on building lease. . . .

Mr. Piozzi says the Music Carts are a proof of all I say. They are so numerous now it makes one wonder. Yet he dislikes the style in which that art is carried on ; and though Vinci is a pleasing singer, she is no favourite for want of striking airs to shew her voice. Mr. Braham sang " Every Valley " so as to remind me of *old Johnny Beard*—the *manner* I mean—quite *exactly*, and you will trust my remembrance of a performer I liked so much. . . .

To Rev. Reynold Davies

BATH, *Wednesday, March* 2, 1803.

DEAR MR. DAVIES,

Write me word that you are well, and the Child well, and that no Contagion is come to Streatham University. We heard Reports of London's great Unhealthiness; and I know *you* are famous for catching horrible Colds. Mr. Piozzi has had this Influenza very badly indeed, and the Gout fell on him beside, and he has not moved *out* of his Bed—nor scarcely *in* it—for this Fortnight.

A Side Wind blows us ill news of Mr. Gillon too, and tho' I write to him I get no Ans[r]. Send me some Words of Comfort, as Baretti used to say, and write seriously, for 'tis no joke to see one's best Friends ill so. I heard from Cumberland Street to-day, and am surprized Miss Thrales do not go out of Town a while till la Grippe is gone by. God bless you, Dear Mr. Davies, and do pacify the anxious Heart of Salusbury's and yours ever.

Mr. Chappelow has lost an old intimate, Mr. Clay; and is very melancholy upon it.

H. L. PIOZZI.

To Rev. Reynold Davies

BATH, *April* 15, 1803.

What a nice Child is our Salusbury! thus to work hard and keep *well*, and give one no Pain but all Pleasure. I thought *you* would scarce escape

this horrid Influenza, and how weak and how low it doth leave one! my first Attempt at going out of the House was Yesterday in a *Sedan Chair* by leave of Doctor Parry and Mr. Bowen—our good Countrymen both; and at the Head here of a Profession which this Spring will be found but too lucrative God knows.

May we but get safe back to Wales! The Change of Air will set all up again: and if it might suit Mr. Wood to come once more to Brynbella with little Dear it w^d be a choice Delight for his Aunt: who will not suffer him to come there *alone* and spend his Time in Stables and with Serv^ts in Danger not only of forgetting all he now thinks he knows, but in Danger of every possible Mischief. A Boy of 10 years old being much less safe than one of 5 under Miss Allen's Protection.

We must think how to manage all this . . . and oh that Dear Mr. Wood were the Man!

Well, as to Whitelock, Mr. Piozzi must, as Dr. Johnson advised in a similar Case once, "If the Fellow is refractory, Sir,—send a rough Att^y to him and all will be well."

When next Michaelmas comes . . . let you and I begin our long *Carrière de Vingt-sept ans* . . . and may we finish it happily . . . in spite of Influenza.

Pray be so good as to receive our £12, 10 due at last Lady Day, and Vale Dear Mr. Davies. *Jubeo te bene valere.*

H. L. Piozzi.

To Miss Hamilton

BRYNBELLA, NEAR DENBIGH,
N. WALES, *Monday, May* 13, 1805.

That my dear Miss Hamilton sh^{d} wish to hear in our School Boy Phrase that I arrived Safe, is so good a thing for *me*, I hasten to tell it her, remembering the comfortable hope of seeing I received yours by return of Post. We lingered on the Road visiting Miss Owen at Shrewsbury, and after that spending two or three Days with the Ladies of Llangollen Vale : and are now just sate down in our pretty house looking how the Sun sets in the Irish Sea, and thinking what charming Friends we have gain'd from the opposing Shore. It w^{d} not please me tho' that you sh^{d} like my Letters as well as you do my Conversation. Doctor Johnson said of some Female Acquaintance who wrote agreeably, " Now," says he, " if I were married to that Woman I would always live 200 Miles away from her, and make her write to me twice o' Week." But far from this, I am feeling awkward that instead of walking down the Hill only to walk up it again, as I shall surely do early to morrow Morn^{g} . . . I cannot walk to No. 41 and gain so many new and delightful Ideas . . . there w^{d} be no Need of Amusement to the Eye . . . no desire of listening even to Woods full of Birds, while those Voices hung in one's Ear. Well ! My Lord Chesterfield says the more Tastes people cultivate,

the better for them ; I shall set about weaning my Calves, watching my young Plantations, reading with the Curate, and keeping clear of Complaints that may make it necessary to consult with the Apothecary. A little Scandal now and then with a Female Neighbour will add to the Charms of rustic life.

And thus do We
By aid of Sugar sweeten Tea.

But I had forgotten the Hour when Postman calls for the Brynbella Bag : oh may I once be able to teach my dear Miss Hamilton *that Hour* ! 'tis all she will be able to learn from her's and her charming sister's and her dear Mama's

Obliged and faithful ser^{vt}
H. L. Piozzi.

Mr. Piozzi would have me stop the Man to scrawl his best Respects.

To Dr. Whalley

Jackson's Hotel [Chester],
June 17, 1808.

I told dear Mr. Whalley that I would write from Chester ; and so I do write from Chester, Wednesday, 15th June ; and I do say that when we arrived yesternoon my master's pulse was better than mine, and for that fact Doctor Thackeray is good and sufficient authority ; but then I have had a bilious

attack, which begun threatening while you was at Brynbella, and has not shown signs of retreating till just now.

Thanks, eight thousand, for the eight dinner pills ; they will preserve me from future seizures, and the prescription will be easily made up by good Mr. Moore.

You bade me go see a cottage, and Dr. Thackeray calls me to see a fine house, but I defy either to amaze me as did the County Gaol in this old City I hope you went to see. Now without any exaggeration, we may call it a model of simple magnificence—the cleanliness so perfect, the chapel so impressive, the baths and liveries to wash and to distinguish the prisoners so well judged. They are fitting up a statue of Britannia in the front, and Dr. Thackeray asked me for a motto. " A poet," I replied, " has already made it in these lines :—

> Her poor to palaces Britannia brings,
> St. James's Hospital may do for kings."

It must have cost an enormous sum.

It is true that the author of " Marmion " has received from the Scotch booksellers a thousand guineas for a thousand lines. Sure we are running over with money ! Yet that fact was told me by no bad authority ; and I like " Marmion " very much indeed, though the return to Gothic architecture, and tales of the darker ages, may not, perhaps, evince good taste, but rather weariness of that which long was deemed such, as poor

Graham said of human life, in his neglected "Telemachus,"

> Hence noble souls,
> Tired of the tedious and disrelish'd good,
> Seek their enjoyment in acknowledg'd ill,
> Danger, and toil, and pain.

Adieu, dear Mr. Whalley! you are treading

> Old Caledonia, stern and wild,
> Meet nurse for a poetic child;
> Land of brown heath and shaggy wood, &c.

I should not wonder if you met Lord and Lady Keith in your rambles; they are gone northward and what Lady Kirkwall told, and you so readily believed, I understand to be quite true. Once more, adieu! and a good journey; and may you never hear worse tidings of my good husband than are now reported by your true, and faithful, and obliged H. L. P.

He cannot walk, nor can he eat; yet he certainly does not fright his friends and his wife as when you spent a week with us.

To a Welsh Neighbour[1]

1814.

Your partiality will encourage me to a long chat with you concerning the atmospheric stones which have attracted much of my attention. I do believe that Diana of the Ephesians was no other than one of these, and it was thought, you know, that she

[1] Copied—by Hayward — from Miss Williams Wynn's commonplace book.

fell down from Jupiter, but I have heard a Cambman maintain that it was possible that the *moon* might produce them—an idea best befitting to a *lunatic*. Dr. Milner's joke on such immechanical notions is the very best I know — the ready-furnished house. They must, I think, go *up* before they fall down, and certainly there are more volcanoes at work than we are watching, which fill the air with substances of an attractive kind, which, for the most part, assume conical shapes, as Nature when alone appears particularly to delight in. The Dea Pessinuntia, or Cybele of classic mythology, was, I fancy, a mere meteoric composition. They washed her with much silly reverence, you remember, and Heliogabalus's black stone, which he drove into Rome with four white horses, was nothing better, only the form happened to be perhaps a more regular and perfect cone. He was a Syrian, you know, and this, dropping from heaven as they believed, served excellently to represent their Bel, or Baal, or lost Thammuz, the *Sun*, in short, of which divinity he was *priest*, as a pyræum of aspiring flame. . . .

Let me hope that you will not pursue geology till it leads you into doubts destructive of all comfort in this world, and all happiness in the next. I am not afraid of *Gibbon*. Whoever has a true taste of Cicero's sweetness and Virgil's majesty, will not take *his* modern terseness of expression or neatness of finish, so completely French, for perfection. . . . With regard to our own nobility and

people of fashion getting into these horrid scrapes of swindling and stock-jobbing,[1] and the Lord knows what—they fright *me* to read of them. We need no longer say with Capt. Macheath,

> I wonder we han't better company
> Upon Tyburn tree.

The executive Power should really address them now in the official phrase of

> My lords and gentlemen !

Meanwhile Alexander deserved much of the bustle we made about him. When a child, it seems, his grandmother, the great autocratix Catherine, took an English boy out of a merchant's counting-house at Petersburgh and put him about the young Czar as a playfellow and to teach him our language. When she had done with him he was sent off of course, and Alexander confessed that his companion was forgotten. One day, however, in the crowds of London, the Emperor recognised a face that he knew, and made the man come up and say in what way he was *now*, and how he could be served ; after which interview no time was lost, till the Prince Regent had not promised only, but actually provided, this old companion of his new friend with a place in the Treasury of 500*l.* a-year. Such actions are like those related in novels, and acted on the stage. . . .

I refused every invitation for the shows in the Park, and saw the red glare over London so plainly

[1] This evidently alludes to the fraud for which Lord Dundonald was unjustly punished.

from my own gate, that every moment added to my rejoicing that I was no nearer the crush and the crowd when so many *unnamed* human creatures perished. Miles Peter Andrews, the rich and gay, sent out two hundred cards of invitation to see the festivities from his windows, verandah, &c., but Miles Peter Andrews (his friends say) *went off* before the fireworks ; so his heir removed the body and received company *himself*. You and I have read of a golden age, a silver, and an iron age : is not *that* we live in, the marble age ? so smooth, so cold, so polished. . . .

Meantime 'tis really curious to hear the different opinions of those who live at the Fountain Head of information. London at this moment exhibits bills stuck up on every post, with Murder in large letters on it, soliciting the apprehension of a felon who has killed his sweetheart, and the lawyers all declare that the annals of Newgate are *disgraced* (comical enough) by the proceedings of the common people these last three years. . . . Per contra, as shopkeepers would express it, you may see the *good* people (I visit many of those who style themselves the *Evangelicals*) congratulating me and each other on the diffusion of religious knowledge and consequent virtuous behaviour. Jews, say they, are converting, slaves releasing, and heathen nations obtaining instruction by means of missionaries warm in the cause of piety, and useful in researches for bettering the general condition of mankind. Preachers, no longer supine, *vie* with each other

in eloquent persuasion of their hearers. Who, twenty or thirty years ago, would have run after any one of those who now adorn our pulpits ? and are, as far as I can observe, very coolly listened to Such is my survey of London in 1814.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *April* 10, 1815.

I return your paper, dear Sir, and thank you for the additional conviction it has given me, that argument and eloquence can be found in Free States only,—decision and promptitude in Despotic Governments alone. While we are talking, they will *act* however, and our pelf will put the puppets in motion.

Do you remember the French Fable of *Dragon à plusieurs Testes*, and *Dragon à plusieurs Queues?* I will look for it. Meanwhile I wish Buonaparte was pulled down. Too long he has made the world his pedestal, mankind the gazers, the sole figure, he !

Mrs. Diamond is just come in, and invites me to her box to see Mr. Betty.

The " Star " containing Lord Liverpool's and Castlereagh's speeches on the Prince's message.

To Sir James Fellowes

SUNDAY, *June* 18, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR JAMES FELLOWES,

Left me but ill that Saturday Morning, and I have never been very well since. Cramps and

Pains all over the Epigastric Region which our Ladies call Spasms, and the Spaniards Flatos. . . . I finished your Book notwithstanding, till it came to the Nuns' Part; and then made me my own Dissertation. Apropos your charming sister tells me that I may send heavy Pacquets by this Conveyance, and so I will too . . . but if you will read Faber's last pamphlet . . . a half-crown work, 76 Pages only, you will see that it is France not Buonaparte . . . except as Agent for her . . . against whom the Prophecies appear to present Commentators, as originally directed: and I have of late years been inclined to think with them, tho' bred in a different School.

Miss Fellowes followed me to the Play last night with your kind Friendly Letter . . . how good you all are to poor H. L. P. I must not complain with so much reason to be thankful, but you remember the Italian Proverb :—

> Aspettare, e non venire,
> Stare in Letto e non dormire,
> Servir amici, e non gradire,
> Son tre Cose a far morire.

> To waste whole Days in vain expecting,
> Consume the Night in sad reflecting,
> On friends forgetful or neglecting,
> Must of all ills be most dejecting.

I never c^d^ translate those Lines tolerably till this Streatham Business was pending . . . as we have learned to call it from the Lawyers . . . but the ladies have taught me.

I am delighted that you have seen the Park and my Mother's incomparable Likeness: when I thought myself dying last Week, I tied up your Paper in her Spanish Bible and gave it my Maid to take care of for you. She, like yourself, was a Proficient in all languages, and like you prefer'd *la Verdadera Castellana* . . . a Bible by Cyprian de Valera is the only thing I possess worthy your acceptance by which you may remember me.

The portraits in the Library are alive with strong Resemblance all of them . . . and I . . . only am left a poor dejected solitary thing, like the Old Woman in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."

Leak is an excellent Creature: You know I am much beloved by my servants, old Jacob Weston and Young Betsy Jones. . . . We used to call Leak the General down in Wales . . . General Lake; because he conducted all things, and made that Estate twice the Place it was when he came to it . . . but Salusbury and he never liked one another.

Write to me, Dear Sir, you shall know whether I am to live in this Fret-work or get into a plain Place . . . before I know it myself; Leak shall call and inform you . . . but when you have Leisure send me a Letter . . . because if in the Dark Flint there does lie a spark of conceal'd Fire, it will starve there, without the polish'd Steel strikes it out . . . and send the "Retrospection" in boards from Stockdale,

That I may correct the gross & numerous Mistakes. I believe at my Heart that in the 1000 Pages there are more than 1000 Errors————May your

Book have better Fortune! I was going to say how I hated Scotsmen and McGregors in particular, when comes a Letter from that dear generous Mr. Dalgleish . . . wishing to offer to lend me Money. . . . Astonishing! I really never spent six evenings in his Company and shall I be low-spirited when endued by God Almighty's peculiar Mercy with Power to endure such Enmity . . . and excite such Friendship as in this extraordinary Year 1815 . . . have been offered to dear Sir James Fellowes's obliged and grateful

H. L. Piozzi.

Leak is selling out his own Stock now to pay my Taxes—Poor Thing!

I do hope Sir James F. will fancy some of the articles and save from hands of the profane. Perhaps the family will be zealous to secure some Things . . . perhaps an Offer will arrive of taking the *Tout Ensemble*. People see me live as I do and think I mean a long Continuance in the same Course of Wretchedness . . . but I am the more Tired of it, as I see so little Pleasure given to those who sh[d] render my situation more Comfortable by at least affected Assiduity . . . but neither real daughter nor adopted Son have ever dropt a hint as if I was living beneath myself . . . only Salus-

bury just said once, Why did I not keep a man servant? My Reply was . . . because I c^d^ not afford it? This Sale will make me rich in my old Age; and I see everybody selling, so why sh^d^ not I their Example pursue, and better my Fortune as other Folks do?

[Written during a toothache.]

To Sir James Fellowes

BLAKE'S HOTEL,
Monday, July 31, 1815.

My dear Sir James Fellowes's friendly heart will feel pleased that the spasms he drove away, returned no more: altho' you were really scarce out of the street before I received a cold short note from Mr. Merrik Hoare, who married one of the sisters, to say that Lord Keith, who married the other, wished to decline purchasing: so here I am no whit nearer disposing of Streatham Park than when I sate still in Bath. Money spent and nothing done: but bills thronging in every hour. Mr. Ward, the solicitor, has sent his demand of 116*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.* I think, for expences concerning Salusbury's marriage. I call that the *felicity* bill: those which produce nothing but infelicity, all refer to Streatham of course. But you ran away without your epigram translated so much apropos:

> Créanciers! maudite canaille,
> Commissaire, huissiers et recors;
> Vous aurez bien le diable au corps
> Si vous emportez la muraille.

Creditors ! ye cursed crew,
Bailiffs, blackguards, not a few :
Look well around, for here 's my all :
You 've left me nothing but this wall,
And sure to give each dev'l his due,
This wall 's too strong for them or you.

I must make the most of my house now they have left it on my hands, must I not ? *may* I not ? and, like my countrymen at Waterloo, sell my *life* as dear as I can. Oh *terque quaterque beati* ! those who fell at the battle of St. Jean, when compared to the miseries of Cadiz and Xeres ; and oh, happy Sir James Fellowes ! whose book, well disseminated, will save us from those horrors, or from an accumulation of them ; when the Cambridge fever shall break out again among the Lincolnshire fens, if we have unfavourable seasons. The best years of *my* temporal existence—I don't mean the happiest; but the best for powers of improvement, observation, &c.—were past in what is now Park Street, Southwark, but then Deadman's Place ; so called because of the pest houses which were established there in the Great Plague of London. From clerks, and *blackguards not a few*, I learn'd there that Long Lane, Kent Street, and one other place of which the name has slipt my memory, were exempt from infection during the whole time of general sickness, and that their safety was imputed to its being the residence of tanners. I am, however, now convinced from your book, that it was seclusion, not *tan*, that preserved them. And do not, dear Sir,

despise your sibyl's prediction: for that God's judgments are abroad, it is in vain to deny; and though France will support the heaviest weight of them till her phial is run out; our proximity, and fond inclination to connect with her, may, and naturally *will* produce direful effects in many ways upon the morals, the purses, and the health of Great Britain.

Do you observe that there is already a pretender started to the Bourbon throne? You cannot (as I can) recollect in the very early days of the Revolution, that Abbé Sieyès declared he had saved the *real Dauphin* from Robertspierre, and substituted another baby of equal age to endure the fury of the homicides. Some of us believed the tale, and some, the greater number, laughed at those who *did* believe it. But an intelligent Italian, since dead, assured me that the last Pope, Braschi, believed it; and marked the youth, in consequence of that belief, with a Fleur-de-Lys upon his leg. Whether the young man described in the newspaper as seizing the Duchess d'Angoulesme, is that person or another: or whether some fellow under the influence of national insanity, imagines himself the Dauphin; he is likely enough to disturb them and divide their friends. Such times by the violence of fermentation produce extraordinary virtues; but your incomparable Don Diego Alverez de la Fuente would never have had his excellence of character properly appreciated, had you not been the man to hand his fame down to

posterity. Æneas would have been forgotten but for Virgil.

I am not yet aware that any suspicion of promoting contagion during the fearful moments you describe, lighted on the Jews : the propensity they show to deal in old clothes makes it very likely that they should now and then propagate infectious diseases among their Christian persecutors, but I hope those days are coming fast to an end ; when France has been disposed of, *their turn will come.* You will find a kind word or two for them in the first chapter of my second volume (of " Retrospection "), but the last chapter in the first volume is my favourite, and should be read before the short dissertation on the Hebrews for twenty reasons. I hope you like my preface, and find it *modest enough*, tho' the critics had no mercy on my *sauciness.*

Well ! now the rest of this letter shall be like other people's letters, and say how hot the streets are, and how disagreeable London is in the summer months ; and how sincerely happy I should have been to pass the next six or seven weeks at Sidmouth, but that,—— Oh, such speeches are *not* like other people's letters at all : but that,—— I have not (with an income of 2000*l.* a year) 5*l.* to spend on myself, so encumber'd am I with debts and taxes. Leak says he must pay 40*l.* Property Tax, now, this minute. He is a good creature, and will be a bitter loss to his poor mistress, whenever we part ; although the keeping him, and his wife,

and his child, is dreadful, is it not? Since, however, in mental as in bodily plagues, despondency brings on ruin faster than it would come of itself:

> What yet remains? but well what 's left to use,
> And keep good humour still, whate'er we lose.

Give my best love to dear Miss Fellowes, compliments to Mrs. Dorset if with you, and true regards to your venerable and happy parents, beseeching them all to remember that they have a true servant in, Dear Sir, your infinitely obliged,

H. L. P.

The battle with Anderdon will be fought to-morrow. I make sure of losing the *field*; my generals are unskilful. Direct Mrs. Piozzi, Bath.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *Wednesday*,
September 27, 1815.

Why Dear Sir James Fellowes! Peter the Cruel was surely *your* ancestor instead of *mine*. After the thousand kindnesses you and your charming family, *hombres y hembras*, had heaped on your ever obliged H. L. P., to run out of the town so, and never call to say farewell. Ah! never mind; I shall pursue you with letters, and they shall be more serious than you count on. I took your Spanish Bible *myself* to Linton's (the man in Hetling Court), on Monday morning; and thither the Wraxall shall follow, when I have done

cramming it with literary gossip. Your name on its first page secures it for the present.

Now do not wrong me by suspicion of low spirits. All the absurdity consists in making you an offer of such trifling remembrances; but with regard to *my life*, which has already past the portion of time allotted to our species, forgetfulness of danger would be fatuity, not courage. You would not think highly of a soldier, who, hearing the enemy's trumpet though at a distance, should compose himself to take another nap; but what would *he* deserve, who should be found sleeping on an attack?

I have lived to witness very great wonders, and am told that Bramah the great mechanic is in expectation of perfecting the guidance of an air balloon, so as to exhibit in an almost miraculous manner upon Westminster Bridge next spring. I saw one of the first—the *very* first, Mongolfier, I believe—go up from the Luxembourg Gardens at Paris; and in about an hour after, expressing my anxiety whither Pilâtre de Rosier and his friend Charles was gone, meaning of course to what part of France they would be carried, a grave man made reply, "Je crois, Madame, qu'ils sont allés, ces Messieurs-là, pour voir le lieu où les vents se forment."

What fellows Frenchmen are! and always have been. I long for your brother's new account of them, and if I could turn the figures from seventy-four to forty-seven, I would certainly go and see them myself: in a less hazardous vehicle than an air balloon.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *Monday Evening,*
December 11, 1815.

Very ill pleased with myself for sending such an empty scrap when my heart was full, but it was because your servant waited at the door for it; and very ill disposed to delight in your determination upon the choice of life, as Doctor Johnson calls it in his "Rasselas." I sit down now to write you as long a letter as I like, and fairly send it to the post. My dear Sir James Fellowes confesses that I have spoiled him for the frivolous conversation of beaux and belles; if I say all I think, I shall disgust you from the project of practising medicine in a thronged metropolis, where those that employ a physician pretend not to know how far his skill is worthy of confidence, and those that reject him, have no means of guessing wherein lies his deficiency; who choose a doctor, as girls choose a husband, because some other head, as empty as their own, was casually filled with a fancy, —that of his being fashionable. Is there any other rudder used in present life but the mode? Is there any other book read but "Rhoda"? And is not that admired because it shows every body what they like best?—their own faces in the glass. I beg pardon, your brother's little work is well spoken of by every body; but Walter Scott has certainly fallen in the plains of Waterloo: I was always half afraid that Arctic Phœbus would set in a fog.

We had a pretty evening at the Lutwyches, where I repeated your pretty speech and spoiled it from complete nervousness, the word best calculated to disguise ill-humour: and which induced a strangling or choking at the dinner table, which politeness, however, smoothed down so well that nobody was aware on 't, but your dear sister, who called aloud for water. Shall I put it in the "Biographical Mémoires" that both my husbands lived and died in the persuasion that I should expire suddenly, or by accident? It is true that they *did* think so, and that I think so too. Let it serve as one among many inducements to live in a state of preparation. Well! if I die to-morrow, Gillowes' people have now had 1700*l.* of the 2380*l.* which their bill came to: and Leak says we may cut the bill down to 2070*l.* if we could pay it quick, and save the interest: so I sent him 200*l.* now of the January dividends, and must owe *him* 170*l.* instead of owing *them* 380*l.* I don't like the arrangement, though an advantageous one; but I like nothing else better, as in the case of your London practice; apropos to which I will add one good thing: you will see women to more advantage than in a ball room; attentive to a sick parent, brother, or sister, and you will say:

> Oh woman! in our hours of ease
> Capricious, coy, and hard to please;
> When grief and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou.

Those are Walter Scott's lines, and very pretty sure. While you accept my criticism, and quote

my "Synonymes," I will not complain (though but just three years behind your father) of the *tædium vitæ*. By the way, I am engaged to dine at the dear Vineyards on the 14th of February, and you are engaged to be at the Lutwyches on the 15th of this December.

I met your mamma in the street, and said, "Well! Ma'am! Sir James Fellowes has not forgot me though among so many charmers." "Forgot *you*!!" replied Mrs. Fellowes, "I would not give a pin for him if he forgot *you*." So you see I have a friend at court.

Poor old Dr. Harrington is going, and I now wish him gone. When the bright visions painted by the pencil of youth, or those no less dear to us formed by the firmer hand of maturity, on the canvass of human understanding, grow dull, and dirty, and dingey, like those landschapes of Titian done when he was ninety years old, 'tis more kind to let them drop quietly in pieces, than sew them coarsely together, and bid for them as a rarety. I wish he would pack up and be gone.

Dr. Holland helped to lower my spirits too: all my Venetian friends killed or beggared by this vile revolution. How melancholy!

So Farewell! and for a short time, dear Sir: come soon and chase the gathering clouds away.

Mon premier est le premier de son espèce,
Mon second n'eut un premier jamais:
Mon tout, je n'aime guère le vous dire.

H. L. P.

But adieu !

Dr. Myddleton had been troubled with cramps and spasms, but shook them off, and used the slipper bath. When in it one evening he cried, " Oh, my head," and died without another word or groan.

Nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni.

To Sir James Fellowes

Saturday, February 3, 1816.

I have some very curious things at Streatham, more curious than you think for ; one pair of frightful old Etruscan jars, for example, given me by a monsignore, Ennio Visconte, a Milanese nobleman then resident at Rome, and a first-rate connoisseur.

" These," said I, " are indeed antiques." " Antiques ! " replies the man ; " why they were antiques when in Cicero's cabinet. Antiques ! why they were antiques in Romulus's time ; they are coeval with the Babylonish captivity." With proper blushes I accepted them, and there they are.

I have a pair of old blue and white porcelain bottles, too, which were brought into my family by an old Salusbury in the year 1400 ; and my grandmother used to frighten my father from improper matches, by holding them in her hand, and protesting she would break them ; " for," said she, " they came by the Red Sea before the passage

round the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, and do you think they shall ever be possessed by Miss Such-a-one ? " When, however, she learned that he had united himself with his cousin Cotton of Combermere's daughter, she said : " Well, then, now I will kiss my old bottles, and keep them for John's eldest child." They are yet in her possession, 1816.

To-morrow I shall break quarantine, go to church (in a chair), and give God thanks for all his mercies.

Your ever obliged and grateful

H. L. P.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *October* 11, 1816.

In adversity, in prosperity, ever dear and kind friend, my Wraxall opens well. What signifies knowledge locked up, either in man or book ? I think if Lady Keith has a fault besides her disregard of poor H. L. P., that is hers.

Oh ! here is a new book come out, that I know not how she will like, or how the public will like. Do you remember my telling you that in the year 1813, when I was in London upon Salusbury's business, before his marriage some months, a Mr. White sent to tell me, through Doctor Myddleton, that he possessed a manuscript of Johnson's, and wished me to ascertain that the handwriting was his own. I invited both gentlemen to dinner,—

we were at Blake's Hotel—and Dr. Gray, afterwards Bishop of Bristol, met them, and I saw that the MSS. was genuine. It was a diary of the little journey that Mr. Thrale, and Mr. Johnson (such he was then), and Miss Thrale and myself made into North Wales, in the year 1774. There was nothing in it of consequence,[1] that I saw, except a pretty parallel between Hawkestone, the country seat of Sir Richard Hill, and Ilam, the country seat of Mr. Port, in Derbyshire. But the gentleman who possessed it, seemed shy of letting me read the whole, and did not, as it appeared, like being asked how it came into his hands, but repeatedly observed he would print it only it was not sufficiently bulky for publication. He said he could swell it out, &c.

We parted, however, and met no more; but when I came first into New King Street, here, November, 1814, a poor widow woman, a Mrs. Parker, offering me seventeen genuine letters of Dr. Johnson, which I could by no means think of purchasing for myself, in my then present circumstances: I recommended her to apply to Mr. White, and she came again in three weeks' time, better dressed, and thanked me for the twenty-five guineas he had given her: from which hour I saw her no more nor ever heard of or from Mr. White again.

[1] The tour, from a topographical point of view, was a tolerably conventional one, most of the ground traversed, if not all of it, being comprised in Pennant's *Tour in Wales* [1770], published in 1778.

Since you and I parted at Streatham Park, however, a Mr. Duppa has written me many letters, chiefly inquiring after my family; what relationship I have to Lord Combermere, to Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, &c., and comically enough asking who my aunt was and if she was such a fool as Doctor Johnson described her; I replied she was my aunt only by marriage, though related to my mother's brother, who she did marry; that she was a Miss Cotton, heiress of Etwall and Belleport, in Derbyshire. Her youngest sister was Countess of Ferrers, and none of them particularly bright, I believe, but as I expressed it, Johnson was a good despiser.

So now here is Johnson's "Diary," printed and published with a facsimile of his handwriting. If Mr. Duppa does not send me one, he is as shabby as it seems our Doctor thought me, when I gave but a crown to the old clerk. The poor clerk had probably never seen a crown in his possession before. Things were very [different] A.D. 1774, from what they are 1816.

I am sadly afraid of Lady K.'s being displeased, and fancying I promoted this publication. Could I have caught her for a quarter of an hour, I should have proved my innocence, and might have shown her Duppa's letter; but she left neither note, card, nor message, and when my servant ran to all the Inns in chase of her, he learned that she had left the White Hart at twelve o'clock. Vexatious! but it can't be helped.

I hope the pretty little girl my people saw with her, will pay her more tender attention.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *Sunday, January* 4, 1817.

Ah! he was a wise man who said Hope is a good breakfast but a bad dinner. It shall be my supper, however, when all 's said and done, and the epilogue spoken upon poor H. L. P.

This snow will do infinite service, but I want something to string my spirits up to concert pitch. The parties are going forward through frost and snow, but I come home from them, when I *do* go, a little duller than at setting out. One reason is they will sing to me, the men will; and oh! how much rather would I hear a dog howl!

Your friend —— was very kind, sate and chatted with me very good-naturedly, and did not sing.

Here is a thin quarto book come out concerning Miss McEvoy; you should see it. The Shropshire boy was not a better deceiver, if the wise men who attest these wonders do indeed give credit to them. For my own part, I think the world is superannuating apace, and I suppose sees double like drunken people, and horses that are going to lose their eye-sight. Such an age of imposture was sure never known. Joanna Southcote, the Fortunate Youth, and Miss McEvoy, all in four years! With stories of the —— of —— that put belief out of all possibility. Poor Wales, too, a

principality without a prince, whenever the king dies.

Mrs. Lutwyche has written from Rome; says her husband can walk now seven miles o' day. They spend their time in seeing sights under the direction of far-famed Cornelia Knight,[1] and rejoycing in the society of the first society of the first city in Europe—never mentioning the famine and distressful state of the inhabitants, which Sir Thomas and Lady Liddel protest is beyond endurance, Capua alone having lost 12,000 human creatures from hunger and consequent disease within the last two years, and this corresponds with Dr. Whalley's account of Northern Italy.

What is one to believe? Now dispose of my compliments, loves, and respects, and *Addio*!

[*To Mrs. Mangin*[2]]

BLAKE'S HOTEL,
Thursday, Aug. 21, 1817.

My dear Mrs. —— will kindly rejoice to see the old handwriting not shaken quite to pieces. Tell Mr. —— that the wheat (and I passed through the principal corn counties) has a cold, lean look; not the rich, brown, glowing colour it used to wear in brighter seasons: 'tis become completely one of

The pale, unripened beauties of the north.

[1] Author of "Marcus Flaminius" and other works.
[2] From Mangin's "Piozziana"—no name given.

But, as people seem disposed to be contented, I will not croak; the hay is everywhere rotting on the ground; it will make good manure. Dear Mr. *Thrale* used to say when the 18th of August was at hand, every pond dry, every brook low, and all the hedges *white* with dust,—he would go to Brighthelmstone that he might *see water*; and now, every pond is over-flowing, every little brook become a river, and the meadows in flat grounds quite inundated. The best is, that the hedges are green as in spring; and—— I know not how near we are to ruin, but buildings increase so that my knowledge of the town and its environs will hardly bring me through.—My dear friends will find *me* unaltered, and my nonsense of the old colour: a little giddiness in the head last night, was my worst complaint; a mere trifle, occasioned by the whirl; and I am better of it this morning.

Meanwhile, if Wisdom *does* cry in the streets, as Solomon says she does, the horn-blowers drown her voice terribly. I wish to get my *work* done, and return to a quieter region. Some part of that work will be unpleasant: I *must* go to *Streatham-park*, the wise folks tell me: poor, degraded, denuded *Streatham-park*! It will be an odious day to me; but my hope is to finish *every* thing, and set my horses' heads homewards next Monday se'nnight. May I find dear No. 11, well and happy; comfort in possession, and pleasure in prospect! And may I, without repining, close my own views, so far as they relate to *this* world,

rejoicing that, among many undeserved delights, I have enjoyed that of approving myself, dear Mrs. ——'s, &c.

Most faithful and obliged,
H. L. Piozzi.

To Sir James Fellowes

Bath, *September* 25, 1817.

My dear Sir James Fellowes will receive, by an early coach I hope, some Bath Fish—better and fresher than any London Fish—and Lady Fellowes will say so. There are no Red Mullets in the Metropolis till November. If mine do not arrive at Adbury on Friday fit for Dinner, I shall be in despair.

How kind the Dear Doctor and Mrs. Fellowes have been! never forgetting their little Friend at No. 8, but sending me Clotted Cream, &c. They thought a little soothing w^d^ do me good I suppose, after Mr. Beloe's venomous attack. Why that Man must have died the Death of a Hornet, leaving his Sting in her who never offended him.[1]

No matter! here is a copious and beautiful Harvest, and many happy hearts in consequence, Salusbury's beyond all. I don't know when I can recollect the Barley in Wales housed by the last week in September, and we are painting and re-

[1] Can you tell me what 's good for the Bite of a dead Viper's Tooth? Oyl I trust, and Emollients: yet 'tis a slow remedy. . . . I feel ashamed to think how much the Posthumous Poyson has disturbed me. Write a word of Consolation and Adieu.

pairing and emulating London all we can . . . nothing doubtful but that the second and third cities of England will soon follow the first, being paved with Iron and lighted with Air.

Mrs. Mostyn, for whom I was, as you know, anxious, is said to be well and disposed for a journey to Italy. Those who return from thence, say the English are in high favour, owing chiefly to Lord Exmouth, whose liberation of Catholic slaves struck the Roman people as an Act worthy Christian . . . and scarce to be credited of British heretics. . . . Mr. Wanzey tells me a thing scarcely to be credited of Romish Bigots . . . no less than that the Protestants have hired an apartment near the Colonna Trajana, where our English Liturgy is read every Sunday by some of the numerous clergymen belonging to our Church, who are loitering about that City . . . unprohibited, unnoticed, unoffended. Such connivance who could have hoped for in 1785 ?

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *October* 8, 1817.

Don't buy the book, dear Sir. That method only propagates the mischief. You know me too well not to believe me completely callous to literary abuse. But this man (who I never saw but once in my life, eighteen years ago) tells the public that Mr. Piozzi pulled down my old family seat at Bachygraig, and that, when he was dead, I searched

the Alps for a young mountaineer to inherit my estate of 4000*l.* per annum. Now, in the first place, Mr. Piozzi paid off a mortgage that was on the Welsh estate with 7000*l.* of his own money, not mine. He then repaired and beautified old Bachygraig at a great expense, rebuilt and pewed the church, made a fine vault for my ancestors, and built Brynbella to live in, because the family mansion lay down low by the riverside.

He begged my name for his brother's son, and when the French invaded Italy, sent for him hither, an infant unable to walk or talk; lived till the lad was fourteen years old, and died, never naming him in his will, but leaving all to me. Why, I must have been worse than Mr. Beloe himself to do any otherwise than I have done.

Yes, yes, when people will talk of what they know nothing about, see what nonsense follows.

[*To Mrs. Mangin*]

BATH, *Friday, Dec.* 12, 1817.

My dear Mrs. —— determines to be wise, grave, and not write idle *flimflams* to her H. L. P. No matter,—I shall send *you* a whole list. Flimflam the first; a curious story of the —— of —— (blanks make it still better); how she ordered a painter at Rome to paint her as the *Titian Venus*!! We must not say *dressed* in the character. It was cold weather, and the room necessarily heated by stoves. The man suffered cruelly from oppression of the

lungs, lately injured by a violent cough; and going suddenly out into the frosty air, broke a blood-vessel, and died.

Flimflam the second.—How Mr. ——, the fine man here at Bath, sends daily presents to the Queen of England; trays of sweetmeats, and pastry made by his own cook; setting her Majesty's household to laugh at him!

Flimflam the third, is a tale of a shopkeeper in Wade's Passage, running away with a woman of quality.

Flimflam the fourth.—A steady assertion that there never was *any fortunate youth*, nor any Mr. ——; that no legacy was left, of any importance; but that the whole was a mere fabrication, to obtain credit for a swindler!

What say you now to "*les on dit*" of Bath? . . .

Doctor G. does not forget his old friends; and is sometimes so little of a courtier as to tell me slyly what a pressing forward there is for notice in the Pump Room; all eager to obtain attention for themselves or their progeny; all disappointed who cannot succeed. The Queen visits Bristol to-day, and King's Weston. It is heavenly weather for such a frolic! And we all hear that her Majesty was enchanted with Bailbrook. Her return was really a happy thing for this town; but though well disposed (as it appears) to gaiety, she has not yet visited the theatre, where decorations of an expensive kind were prepared to grace her appearance. Southey's "Maid of the Inn" is got up as a melo-

drama, and very interesting; but plays are out of fashion; nothing they can do fills the house. Have you read the "Welsh Mountaineers"? It amused *me* of course. Good night! The sun sets now almost behind your old habitation on Queen's Parade; when turned about, how I shall watch its passing Monmouth Hill, while lengthening days and smiling skies will bring you safe home, I hope, to your anxiously-expecting

H. L. Piozzi.

[*To Edward Mangin*]

Bath, *Dec.* 12, 1817.

I still see and *feel* that the absence of my friends has made a long and ugly *parenthesis* in the last page of *my* long, flat, folio life! We continue to make a bustle here; that is, the people do who frequent the court, and cluster round the queen wherever she goes, as the buzzing subjects do about *their* queen bee. We swarm too; for country folks come *in*, I am informed, every market day, for the purpose of seeing her drink a glass of water. *La reine boit* used to be a joke when Frenchmen said it, and now we say it ourselves.

To-day she shows herself at Bristol, and would have gone with two footmen only, had not suggestions, wise ones I am sure, arisen from what Doctor Gibbes (her physician) said,—of its being possible her Majesty might be seriously incommoded in such a populous city as Bristol.

Doctor G. is an admirable being ; he has suffered no distinctions to diminish his care for an old acquaintance !

Miss McEvoy is coming to Bath, to make us believe that she can tell who is in the room by feeling our shadows on the wall !

Pray, has our ecclesiastical history reached you ? it is a very noisy one. The *barometer* fell in two hours from changeable to stormy, and so did the people's temper.

My ill fate forced me into the *Octagon*, when the Bishop of Gloucester preached for the Missionary Society. But, good Lord ! how past all endurance was the heat ! Think of the *squeeze*, and the scent of new black clothes ! We sate, or stood fixed like seeds in a sunflower ; no room to thrust a pin between any two ; the impossibility of escape adding terror to distress. I think the discourse was eloquent, but could not judge ; my head was all amazed. Collections were not made at the door, otherwise Mr. Cruttenden, who made me go in with his family, said the society would have got 50*l.*, each paying only a shilling. But at the Guildhall, two days after, came the archdeacon, my friend Mr. Thomas, and entered his protest against the whole proceeding. He was hissed home by the Evangelicals, who followed him whooting [*sic*]. The protest, however, is published ; and Doctor Gibbes considers it as a beautiful composition.

Well, in the midst of these strange events, and

fearful lookings to the future, Sir Francis Milman's (the physician's) son has written a tragedy ; and they have applied to H. L. P. (as to a pert young hussy), for an epilogue. My *patron* was far away, so I could ask no counsel ; but I hope you think I needed none for " rejection of such addresses." As nothing but kindness and good opinion, however, was expressed, my refusal was very gentle, though very steady : and I heartily wish him success. Adieu : do not let dearest Mrs. —— *believe* the flimflams I enclose : two out of the four, I fancy, are wholly false ; but grave people *do* say them, and expect credit, which I cannot give.

Godwin's new romance pleases nobody : though I like the story of a man, who, early crossed in love, lives quite alone, treating his servants as mere automata, and only desiring to remain undisturbed : till—the fall of some planks discovers to him that an attorney, and his nephew, were settled in quiet possession of his spacious mansion, and ample domain ; and that his domestics were at the command of those men, assisting to keep him up as a confirmed lunatic.

To Sir James Fellowes

BATH, *Monday, December* 15, 1817.

Indeed, my dear Sir, it was nobody but kind and faithful Robert who brought me the letter I had wished for so long ; and he said that your excellent

Father was got pretty well recover'd from this last Attack. Doctor Gray, whose Name and Character you know, laments the loss of his Mother . . . because, says he, she died so unexpectedly . . . at 91 years old ! ! He had left her in high health and spirits but Three Weeks before. Such is this World, its Inhabitants, and their Ideas. He has sent me his Connexions, and two sermons on the Princess's death . . . protesting that he will, or will not publish them as I approve or condemn. . . . The subject is not treated in a commonplace manner, you may be sure, when touched by his Hand.

Poor Princess ! She has really stood like an Academy Figure to be viewed in various Lights. . . . The Shadows in his Sketch are eminently deep and broad . . . an impressive Rembrandt. . . . *Veniamo ad altro.*

Whether the Ropemaker is enriching himself by his Bargain I know not ; but that Cramps and Faceaches are removed—if quite remov'd—from No. 8, Gay Street . . . as the consequence of our Agreement I must religiously believe. A slight Cough and a Pocket Handkerchief Cold are all the Complaints I can muster at present : and that one friend sh[d] send me Sermons to criticise, while the Theatrical Folks try to court me out of an Epilogue does not look as if they Thought I was quite superannuated. Of the Clusters in the Pump room, who swarm around Queen C. as if she was actually the Queen Bee, Courtiers must give

you an account. Of the Ecclesiastical History . . . you will soon hear a great deal; but I am not sure whether it will Interest you. . . . Everybody writing at the same time on one Subject does no harm. The same Ideas may be deliver'd out with Attractions that may lure minds of a different make; and you will kindly rejoice that I came out Alive from the Octogon Chapel, where Ryder, Bishop of Glo'ster, preach[d] in behalf of the Missionaries to a Crowd such as my long Life never witness'd. We were pack'd like Seeds in a Sunflower. At the Guildhall two days after . . . when pious Contributors were expected to come and applaud . . . Archdeacon Thomas suddenly appeared and protested against the Meeting as schismatical. So he was hiss'd home by the Serious Christians . . . Evangelicals, as they sometimes called themselves . . . half the Population of Bath at any Rate . . . and his Friends felt uneasy; till yesterday the Duke of Clarence, some say the Queen, some say both, consoled him by their particular Notice. . . .

To a Welsh Neighbour

1817.

The improvements in London amused me very much, and such a glare is cast by the gas lights, I knew not where I was after sunset. Old Father Thames, adorned by four beautiful bridges, will hardly remember what a poor figure he made

eighty years ago, I suppose, when gay folks went to Vauxhall in barges, an attendant barge carrying a capital band of music playing Handel's water music—as it has never been played since.

I saw Mr. Wanzey yesterday evening. His account of the procession at Rome, consisting of Christian slaves liberated by Lord Exmouth, was very Interesting. They walked up the long street, Strada del Popolo, in uniform, and up to St. Peter's Church, attended by all the priesthood singing Litanies, Thanksgivings, &c. ; then depositing their standards at the foot of the altar, prostrated themselves before the cross, and returned blessing the English, and crying, as soon as they had passed the church doors, " Vivan i bravi Inglesi ! Viva la santa religione," &c.

We are *party* mad here. I do not mean politically so, but the people run to numberless *parties* of a night. No illness or affliction keeps them out of a crowd. A lady at my next door almost had her party on Sunday night, and her husband invited a large company to dinner on the Tuesday following. " Nay," said Dr. Gibbs, " I doubt whether Mrs. —— will *live* beyond Tuesday. She is very ill indeed." At three o'clock the husband sent to put off his company, and at eight o'clock she died. He sent his cards out that day fortnight, and had his party again. So runs our world away. The men play at macko and lose their thousands all morning ; one gentleman was seen to pay seven guineas for the cards he had used in four hours only.

To Sir James Fellowes

May 6, 1818.

You used to say how I preach'd the End of the World; but here was a learned Dr. Hales stood up in our pulpit at Laura [1] last Sunday, and said 62 years more w^d^ complete its Duration. This was in the modern Phrase, committing himself . . . and the Laughers all stuff'd their Handkerchiefs into their Mouths, and the Man went on explaining his Calculation and minding them ne'er a Whit. The Actors are more easily abash'd. Mr. Young look'd full of Distress when he saw Lady Shelley tittering in the Stage-Box at his well-play'd Zanga, and the beautiful Girls her Daughters counterfeiting Sleep. But Derision is a thing no Powers but those of Piety can endure. At her Approach Wit darkens and, as Milton says of Eve, in her Presence—

Wisdom's Self
Loses discountenanc'd—and like Folly shews.

Those large Fields of Ice starve the People's hearts, and they think Insensibility a Merit, I suppose. . . .

[*To Mrs. Mangin*]

Brynbella, *June* 18, 1818.

My dearest Madam,

Your obliging letter arrived yesterday. I am but just come myself, making a slow journey of

[1] Laura Chapel, in Laura Place, Bath, now deserted, roofless, and in ruins. Mrs. Thrale had one of the cosy "recesses" there, comfortably furnished and with a fireplace.

it, and hoping to have seen something *like* your husband at Worcester ; but his brother and family are residing in a beautiful cottage near Malvern, and I could not resist sending him a *portrait* of the place. The evening I meant to pass with *them* I wasted in the china warehouse, but was delighted that I could send you the *picture* of the house they are inhabiting.

Did I ever tell you of a Count Andriani, who dined with Mr. Piozzi and me once in Hanover Square? Helen Maria Williams met him, and whispered me, before dinner, how handsome she thought him. He *was* very showy-looking ; and had made a long tour about our British dominions. While the dessert was upon the table, I asked him which was finest—Loch Lomond or the Lake of Killarney ? " Oh, no comparison," was his reply ; " the Irish lake is a body of water worth looking at, even by those who, like you and I, have lived on the banks of *Lago Maggiore*, that much resembles, and little surpasses it ; the Highland beauty is a *cold beauty*, truly." Helen's Scotch blood and national prejudice boiled over in the course of this conversation ; and when the ladies retired to the drawing-room after dinner, " I was mistaken in that man's features," said she ; " he is not handsome at all, when one looks more at him." Comical enough, was it not ? Everything gets stupid this *hot* weather ; the very grasshoppers are silent ; our large rivers, Severn and Dee, creep dully and languidly along ; whilst the little trout-

streams, once so sharp and saucy, scarcely cover their slow eels, and keep close to the bottom, hiding their heads in mud! Were North-Wales people ever weary of *heat* before? It is a new sensation to *that* native at least, who boasts of yours and Mr. ——'s friendship; and whose feelings *to* the last, *at* the last, perhaps *after* the last in this world, will be those of tender and grateful remembrance; so God bless you and yours, and send you safe home to your affectionate and obedient servant. I am just going to see my curious old house, which Mr. Beloe said dear Piozzi had pulled down. The front gate bears his name, as having repaired and beautified.

[*To Edward Mangin*]

BRYNBELLA, *Aug.* 10, 1818.

Oh, what a beautiful spot I am writing from; the landscape so rich, the prospect so extensive, the sea so calm. I grieve we cannot enjoy the view together; we are neither of us very *national*, yet certainly the scenery in both our countries must be preferred to that of England; except in particular districts. *France* is too little intersected to please my fancy; the eye there is wearied before it has done being pleased.

We are spoiling the sublimity of this vale of Llywdd; cultivating the fine healthy hills, lately so brown and solemn, like dressing old, black-robed judges up, in green coats and white waistcoats. Sir John S. has done better, and planted

his mountains to a large extent, eighty acres, with fine forest timber. Many friends think it a folly; but *he* says, and *I* say, that, in forty years, the wood will be worth as much as the estate below. And what signifies tearing men and horses to pieces, to cultivate and manure these upper regions, which will be more profitable when more in character. The *folly* was in forgetting to sow turnips among the plantations, which they help to keep clean; and pay labourers besides. Never was seen such a harvest; all our wheat will be in by to-morrow night, and oats ready to cut on Monday morning. But—while corn is *ripening*, the people are *repining*; a spirit of discontent pervades every part of Europe, I believe. The labourers' wages at the Cross are twenty one shillings this day, for the week; and when my father lived at old *Bachygraig*,—the date of which is cut in the weathervane, 1537; the house which Mr. Beloe, God forgive him, has said that dear Mr. Piozzi pulled down,—they were only five shillings; yet in those days, I mean in 1740, or thenabout, all were well pleased and happy, with their oat-bread and buttermilk; nor dreamed of wearing shoes, and eating roast meat, except at Christmas and Easter. Those who can unriddle this enigma, are better financiers and deeper politicians than I am. Besides that, these fine guinea o'week labourers will be treated with good bacon dinners every day. My father's hinds, as we called them, fed themselves out of their five shillings, and were happy, and their

cottages clean, and the renters willing to keep a pointer for the squire besides. What a letter is this! exclaims dear Mrs. —— from our H. L. P.! But *Solomon* says little can be expected from those "*whose talk is of bullocks*"; and I like to enter into the detail of this, my *first* and *last* place, well enough. Adieu, dear friends; for a short time, thank God! I wonder where at Bath you will *fix* your residence?

My mansion is in the middle; and it was always *uphill home* from your house to that of, dear sir, yours ever,

H. L. Piozzi.

To a Welsh Neighbour

1818.

Mrs. Lutwych will have the loss not only of a good husband and certain friend, but she will lose her greatest admirer too, which few people could boast of in conjugal life, besides herself and me. Alas! alas! but we must lose or be lost. Her death would have broken his heart. The most painful sight of all is a sick baby, for there is such a vegetating power, such a disposition in the habit to drive that death away which grown people often seem half to invite, that it shocks one; and I hoped poor Angelo would have been the staff of my age. You can scarce think how low-spirited all these things make me. I am glad the sea is at hand to wash care away. This weather is melancholy, and so is all one hears—of riots and conspiracies, and

people that call aloud for murderers, as the Jews did for Barabbas. The trifling spasms which assailed me this morning will do very little indeed —nothing, I trust, towards releasing me from this busy world, described by many as daily improving.

P.S. You wonder at my saying the people call aloud for murderers, but my paper says there were placards distributed in Court while the trials went forward, saying, We want a Bellingham.

To a Welsh Neighbour

1819.

Llewenney Hall pulled down too! and its forests *Alta cadit quercus*; but schools are made of the bricks, and *Teachery*, as I call it in a word of my own inventing, goes on at a famous rate; yet one does not remember it is ever said in the Old or New Testament, "If you *study* My ways, and *learn* My commandments"; but "if you *walk* in My ways, and *observe* My commandments *to do them*," which was surely never so little practised as now. Well, the work of reformation runs forward apace. Female associations are forming every day and everywhere. They come into your kitchens, instruct your servants, tell them how their masters and ladies run to perdition, give them books against tyranny, and tell them they are all slaves.

Your vraie amie octogénaire,

H. L. P.

To Sir James Fellowes

WESTON-SUPER-MARE,
August 27, 1819.

I feel delighted, dear Sir, that you have not forgotten me. Some ladies that I met upon the sands last night said Sir James Fellowes had mentioned my name at gay and fashionable Bognor. This little place is neither gay nor fashionable, yet full as an egg, insipid as the white on 't, and dear as an egg o' penny. I enquired for books; there were but two in the town was the reply, a Bible and a "Paradise Lost." They were the best, however. No market; but I don't care about that. When Miss Burney asked Omiah, the savage, if he should like to go back to Otaheite, "Yes, Miss," said he; "no mutton there, no coach, no dish of tea, no pretty Miss Horneck; good air, good sea, and *very good dog*. I happy at Otaheite." My taste and his are similar.

The breezes are here most salubrious; no land nearer than North America, when we look down the channel; and 'tis said that Sebastian Cabot used to stand where I sit now, and meditate his future discoveries of Newfoundland. Who would be living at Bath now? the bottom of the town a stew-pot, the top a gridiron, and London in a state of defence or preparation for attack, or some strange situation, while poor little Weston is free from alarms, on Juvenal's principle, *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*. I offered a cheque

on Hammersley at the hotel here. "Yes, Madam, by all means," says the landlady; "but pray who is the gentleman? does he reside in Bath? or is he a Bristol merchant?" Our banker little dream'd that such questions could be asked concerning him; and indeed it reminded me of the character in Congreve, who when spoken to of Epictetus, enquired whether he was really a French cook, or only one who wrote out particular receipts.

Miss W——, everybody tells me, is breaking up very fast, but some must come into the world, and some must go out on 't, while it lasts. The comet is gone by without hurting anybody, and when Mr. Hunt's voice is stopt by a rope, there are those who believe we shall be quiet—and so we may, perhaps, —at Manchester.

We have swarms of babies here, and some bathe good-humouredly enough, while others scream and shriek as if they were going to execution. Bessy's boy is among them, completely hydrophobous.

I am going on a water-party next Monday with a very agreeable young man, Mr. Rogers. There are few people here that I know; one lady, however, challenged me as an acquaintance of her brother's just seventy years ago, when he was a little boy at Weston's school, and used to come home for holidays with Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, father of this Lord Combermere, to our house in Jermyn Street, now part of Blake's Hotel.

Adieu, dear Sir, *portez-vous bien*. Present me to Lady Fellowes, and tell your children they have an humble and an attached servant in

H. L. Piozzi.

[*To Edward Mangin*]

Weston-super-Mare,
Saturday Night, Sept. 4, 1819.

No indeed, dear Sir,—if I know myself, I am *not* low-spirited, nor disposed to think myself dying; though feelingly assured that if I lose health life must follow. At *my* age there is no time for sickness, and accommodations, and dispositions, and dawdling. My desire is to leave all straight and smooth behind me. But, as the boys say, there is a long account to *show up*; and one must think of it whether one will or not. Johnson said we lived in a besieged town all of us: and that we ought not to slumber at our posts, as if the enemy had retired from the ground. If so, how much more vigilant should *we* be—*nous autres octogénaires*! *Our* slumbers must be like those of a soldier sleeping on the attack. Life is a magic lantern certainly; and I think more so to women than to men, who often are placed very early in a profession which they follow up regularly, and slide on: with them life *labitur et labetur* almost unconsciously. But—we females! Myself, for example. I passed the first twenty years in my father's and uncle's houses; con-

nected with their friends, dwelling-places, and acquaintances; and fancying myself *at home* among them. No such thing: marriage introduced me to a *new* set of figures; *quite* new; nor did I ever see but distantly and accidentally any of the old group, or their residences, from that day to this; my mother alone excepted. She, indeed, lived near us for nine years out of the seventeen I passed under Mr. Thrale's protection; and after wearing his name four years longer, another marriage drove that set of figures quite away, and I began the world anew, with new faces around me, and in new scenes too: for Wales was as much out of my usual beat as Italy; my first husband having only seen enough of *it*, to create aversion. I did, however, fancy, when Piozzi built a beautiful house on the estate and in the country my parents quitted in my early childhood, that I was got home again, somehow, though oddly. Quite a mistake was *that*! Bath *is* my home; and since I made it such, you, my dear Sir, who have so contributed *to sweeten it to my taste*, are really very kind in wishing me to set up my rest there. It is the safest and most proper place of abode for me.

I thought London was to have run mad last week; but the fever of Reform is not yet hot enough. You will see that the great men who think they are making *Hunt* and *Co.* their tools to pull down one set of ministers, and put up another set which they can command, will themselves at

length be used as tools by the multitude, who are honest in the avowal of *their* meaning, however absurd. *They* mean, like the wise men of Gotham, to pull the pins out of London-bridge, and *oil* them. And I remember wondering, when a baby, why that was thought so very foolish a project; for I doubted not but they wanted something, as we say, to be *done* to them! Indeed, a later adventure showed me how cautiously a work of reformation must be conducted: an old wall we wished to repair, down in Denbighshire, was all over-grown with ivy: "cut it away," said we; "but," replied an experienced workman, "it has grasped the stones it loosened at the beginning; and if we cut it away, the whole will drop to pieces: the ivy now helps to support that wall to which it once clung for support itself." So, I recollected the more serious allegory of the corn and tares, and let the business rest. The Octagon Chapel being shut up, as a *public place*, strikes me as comical! I shall be glad when you have either exposed or extinguished that fraudulent fellow, of whom it appears you have no small cause to complain. Those are among the vile vices one's heart most abhors, I think. *My* heart assures me your E. will never practise, or submit to such: he will be high-minded.

To Sir James Fellowes

WESTON-SUPER-MARE,
Tuesday, September 21, 1819.

I owe you a long letter, and my dear Sir James Fellowes knows that I am always desirous to balance my accounts, how much more when the sun is in Libra! It is indeed an especial mercy that I should be above ground cracking jokes, and making quibbles at fourscore years old; and the people do make such a wonder of me, that by and by they will deceive me into a marvellous good opinion of myself.

My fearlessness in the water attracts the women to the rocks, where it seems such fine sport to see Mrs. Piozzi swim. Poor H. L. P.! she will certainly end in a fish, an odd fish; but 'tis long since any could have said of her, *Mulier formosa supernè*.

Mr. Thrale used to teach Lady Keith with a frog in a large bason, and be so rough with her if she alleged terror, that we swam in our own defence, for he swore he would follow with a horsewhip if we dug a hole in the water, as he justly called it. Dear —— will follow us without any threatenings. She can scarcely fail of being a beautiful woman. Shall we wish her to be a wit, after reading the story of Floretta and the epitaph on my mother? When I said, "Why did you name her person before her mind, Doctor Johnson?" "Just because everybody can judge of the one, and hardly anybody can judge of the other," was the truly wise reply.

Hayley and I were never friends, you know; Lady Sophronia's character and that of Dr. Rumble in some of his never-read writings, only lost our good will, and got no admiration from any one. The epigrams on him and Miss Seward were among the things Sammy Lysons used to read with a world of humour. I much wonder what became of that man's literary gleanings. Dear Conway's kind offer of buying them instantly for me, should they be set for sale, would have won my heart if he had not gained it before; but I hope the danger is over now.

Meanwhile I was right in saying that such small knaveries or follies will merge in the grand knavery of these Russells [1] and Burdetts, who really should be more careful than they are of their own interest; and when they are galvanising the otherwise inert populace, should mind and not exert too strong a power, as the modern phraseology terms it. The monstrous engine they are by steam and vapour raising against Government will fall upon and crush us all under its weight. Sin in Milton acted as they do precisely, for—

> . . . . . She opened; but to shut
> Excell'd her power: the gates wide open stood,
> That with expanded wings a banner'd host
> Under spread ensigns marching, might pass thro'
> With horse and chariots rank'd in loose array:
> So wide they stood, and like a furnace mouth
> Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.

[1] Alluding to Lord John Russell's and Sir Francis Burdett's advocacy of Reform in Parliament.

Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep—a dark
Illimitable ocean—without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and
height,
And time, and place are lost.

Fools! teaching, as you say, English boys to sing *Ça ira*! when they don't know nor can guess what it means. They do know, however, what it means to deny their Redeemer's divinity, and find out how Jesus Christ was only an honest man; yet some of them, of these horrid Unitarians, do believe that he will come to judge the world too. I guess not why, but suppose they settle it on the old classic system of Minos, who put his chancellor's seal in commission, did he not? and called Rhadamanthus and Æacus to his assistance on great occasions. Oh! they are a precious set, certainly.

We had a gentleman here yesterday who attracted much notice. He was young and handsome, had ten lovely children, most of them females, by a beautiful lady, who, being of this new persuasion, seduced her husband to own her opinions, and half break the heart of his good father, the learned and pious Sir Abraham Elton, eighty-six years old. Well, a Mr. Rogers was telling me all this yester-morning, and added that young Elton was a fine actor once in private theatricals, but that he was a serious man now, forbore to play at cards, or dance, or see a play; and was supposed to write Hunt's speeches for him, and send essays to the office in London where Deism and French philo-

sophy are taught, under direction of Mr. Carlisle : but oh ! what was my sense of horror at 5 o'clock the same dreadful yesterday, to hear that this man was raving round the town in fruitless pursuit of his two sons—one fourteen, the other sixteen years of age, both good swimmers—both certainly and irrevocably drowned ; the mother saved from suicide only by the immediate intervention of a medical man, a Welshman, a Mr. Price. To-day they have left the place.

My plan is to walk and bathe, and enjoy the salutary breezes of poor little Weston, and then home to my nest at No. 8, Gay Street ; no London or Adbury this year. When returned home, I shall call on your Divie Robertson for a double portion of his fine wine, because the Salusburys of Brynbella will come to me at Christmas.

Adieu ! I have scarce room to say how faithful a servant you and your fair lady and dear babies possess in their and your ever obliged and grateful

H. L. P.

To a Welsh Neighbour

1820.

I certainly feel sorry for his death ; and if I do *not* feel *alarmed*, who am three or four years older, it is because even the grim Lion Death may be rendered familiar by stroking, and never suffering him long out of sight. . . . Will you hear the story of my *present* neighbour ? Zenobia Stevens, of a good family not far off, had a lease of ninety-

nine years under the Duke of Bolton, and *lived it out*. When she went herself and gave it up, her kind landlord begged her to keep the house during her life, and offering her a glass of wine, " *One*, if your Grace pleases," was her prudent reply, " but as I am to ride twelve miles on a young colt these short evenings, I am afraid of being giddy-headed."

To Mrs. Pennington

Begun Thursday Night,
Mar. 24, 1820.

Dearest Mrs. Pennington will be glad to hear that four horses, and three able-bodied men, brought my little person safe home . . . at 9 o'clock last night. Had I died, like Mrs. Luxmore, of cough and strangulation, I should not have seen our tall Beau for 5 minutes after breakfast: —*a morning call*. He looked in high health and good spirits, said your eloquent praises had produced others, which Miss Williams sends me this moment, and I really think them very good indeed ; he does deserve *all* praise in every situation,—in all situations of life,—and his adoring mother says he was from infancy the best boy upon [earth]. We had no time to talk of plans, present or future, [he] will go to London next week, whether to return again I know not. . . .

Captain Marshall has got what he wished and wanted. How long will he be happy in the Prize he has so contended for ? Mr. Mangin said to

me once, that if he were to go to Heaven, (unlikely enough, added he,) it would be disagreeable to him for a week at least,—the *first* week,—but he should grow reconciled to it. Would not *that* speech make a good note to some of the observations in Johnson's "Prince of Abyssinia"? It would at least do well for Sophia Lee, whose misanthropism I reverence, while others ridicule it. Why should she let the people in to *visit* her, as it is called? She knows they come for curiosity, not from affection; and I suppose her means of doing good have been curtailed by accident, her powers of pleasing by infirmity and age. Why should she then exhibit the *Skeleton* of Wit?—or Beauty, if she ever possessed it? Is there no time when one may be permitted to die in a corner [after] arranging our little matters for the Journey? Lord! I [shall have] to expire in a Curtsey and a Compliment, and request the Spectators [to] *honour* me with *their commands*—to the next World. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

PENZANCE, *Dec.* 27, 1820.

. . . . . .

Well! at [81] years old, and my [82nd] Birthday is hard at hand, one is easily convinced of money's importance to felicity. *No* suicide, or comparatively none, is committed but for *lack of pelf*. Yet money, if people are *stuffed* with it, like a Fillet of Veal, does not keep them alive. Do you remember

a comely Mrs. Taylor, who had married an old man, and possessed herself of his riches to an *immense* amount? She sent dear Conway £5 for a Benefit Ticket, tho' being just left a widow she could not go to the Play. *She is dead*: a woman about 40 years old, I suppose, apparently strong and healthy.

This is *stranger*, though not so dreadful, as the fire, of which your kind letter gave me the first account. I suppose it was occasion'd by some of these new devices to snuff candles by conjuration, or fill your teapots by steam. They cook their dinners by stratagem, and assassinate those whose talents lighten the cares of life, best illuminated by *genius*, like that of unfortunate Naldi, charming creature as he was!!—and to die *such* a death! My heart bleeds for his handsome wife and pretty daughter,—highly accomplished *both*; and left to *starve* on the remembrance of his unrivalled powers.

Cruel reflexion! But all reflexion is cruel, and so we run to get rid of it. My own conscience however congratulates *me* that I had discharged Upham's long Bill; so if he had suffer'd it would not have been by *my* fault or folly. I have not lived on fish in a foggy atmosphere and smoky house for nothing, when comforts like those come smiling to my heart. . . .

Miss Willoughby is in the highest favour here. She plays Country Dances, Waltzes, &c. for the boys and girls to dance, after winning their money—

or that of their parents—at sixpenny whist; and she makes riddles and charades to amuse us all, and is very entertaining.

Adieu! Here is no room to tell of a shipwreck and a *Parrot*, with two other *two*-legged creatures, saved out of thirty eight, coming from Surinam. Wretched Sailors! now begging their way to London, with only what they sold the bird for in their pockets. . . .

To Mrs. Pennington

PENZANCE,
Sunday, Feb. 25, 1821.

My last letter to dear Mrs. Pennington should be a pretty one, but it will only be dull; replete with Kitchen-griefs, and thanks to Heaven that they are my worst afflictions. Mr. Kenrick's insults have brought me civil letters from Lord and Lady Keith, kind ones from Mr. and Mrs. Hoare, and all will end—in nothing, as they hope, and as I firmly believe. Pray do not suffer your good husband, (so much younger than myself,) to grow old. He and I mean to keep on this many a day, and we will not *shew teeth* when *biting* is over with us.

Now for the Kitchen-griefs. James has behaved monstrously ill, "beaten the Maids a row," like the fierce fellow in Shakespear, and forced reproofs even from *my acquaintance* by his *out-door* conduct. This has been going on a long while, but I forbore

to speak to you about it, till it suited me to say—do, dear Mrs. Pennington, get me a Footman. Not a fellow to wear *his own clothes* ; I must have a *Livery* Servant, who will walk before the Chair, and ride behind the Coach, and be an old-fashion'd, tho' not ill-looking servant. My little Plate, so small in quantity, is easily clean'd, but *clean* it must be. For I will not live in a state of disgust when I have a decent mansion over my head, and James was too dirty and slovenly, even for a wretched smoky closet like that I inhabit at Penzance : he is a sad fellow. . . .

& now

Let me tell you the sights that we have *seen.* I always like them better than the tales that we have *heard* ; and to-day the tales are truly melancholy. Lord Combermere has lost his only child, a son ; so his honours and titles are gone, and the estate will fall, I suppose, to Willoughby Cotton, son of the Admiral, my Uncle's *second* boy. He had nine. *This* young fellow was a Colonel in what Regiment I know not, and married Lady Augusta Coventry, who brings Babies every year :—but these are *not* the sights I meant to tell you of.

On last Wednesday then, a memorable day, Mr. George Daubuz John undertook to show us the Land's End, and we did stand upon the last English stone, jutting out from the Cliffs, 300 feet high, into the Atlantick Ocean, which lay in wild expanse before us, tempting our eyes towards the land Columbus first explor'd, Hispaniola. Dinner

at a mean house, affording only Eggs and Bacon, gave us spirits to go, not forward, for we could go no further, but sideways to a tin and copper mine under the sea. Aye! 112 fathom from the strange spot of earth we stood on, in a direct line downwards, where no fewer than three score human beings toil for my Lord Falmouth in a submarine dungeon, listening at leisure moments, if they *have* any, to the still more justly to be pitied Mariner, who is so liable to be wrecked among those horrid rocks, proverbial over all the kingdom,—Cornish rocks! ruinous to approach, as difficult to avoid. The men go up and down in buckets, with two lighted candles each, into a close path, long and intricate. And should their lights go out before their arrival in the open space where their companions work, there they must remain till the hour of relieving one wretched set by another comes to set them free. Billows meanwhile roaring over their heads, upon a stormy day most dreadful, threatening to burst the not very thick partition of solidity that divides them from the light of heaven, bestowed on all but Miners. This place is called Botalloch, whence we drove home our half-broken carriage but not even half-broken bones; having refreshed at the house on which is written "First Inn in England" on one side the Board, and "Last Inn in England" on the other. By "us" and "we" I mean Miss Willoughby and H. L. P., but we took our two Maids, Bell and Hickford, on the Dicky, and James rode. Four

horses were not too many for such an exploit, tho' one of them was a Waterloo warrior. . . .

We will go to Conway's Benefit certainly, if I get home time enough: Miss Willoughby will wish herself of the party most truly. But for *her* I should have pass'd many a dreary hour. . . .

To Miss Willoughby

No. 10, Sion Row,
Clifton, *March* 16, 1821.

Something tells me—vanity I suppose—that dear Miss Willoughby will be glad to hear I am where I wish to be, on the sweet Gloucestershire Downs, numberless old acquaintance, and some new, kindly expressing pleasure at my return. Poor Mrs. Yorke, 10,000*l.* richer than when we parted; ten years older, and all in ten months' time; Mrs. Lambart's death, Sir Philip Jennings' sister, caused the alteration. Our friend Conway is not younger; he won't play Master Slender now; his enquiries after you were very kind indeed, and he rejoyced for my sake that Penzance was your chosen retreat. Oh, how he regrets his Lesserillo! But Mr. Green has secured 500*l.* per annum, with an agreeable woman, and must not, for shame, lament the profession, which will not soon cease to lament him. The benefits are thin I hear, but that for which we are interested gives good hope. Monday, 26th, will be the day, and Mirandola, with the Chevalier de Moranges, the night's enter-

tainment. I have seen the future footman; he will at worst be better than poor James, I suppose: who is gone to Bath now on a frolic: Bessy tearing her hair, and Mrs. Pennington exhausting all her eloquence in expressions of wrath and anger.

It is almost time to tell you what a providence watched over your old friend at Exeter, after my letter was written, at three o'clock, Sunday morning. The bed was very high, and getting into it, I set my foot on a light chair, which flew from the pressure, and revenged it on my leg in a terrible manner.

The wonder is, no bones were broken; only a cruel bruise and slight tear, and we trotted on hither, after cathedral service, at which I hardly could kneel to thank God for my escape. So Sir John may look to my demise now at his leisure, and my legacy [leg I see].

"Not a mouse stirring," the French translators of Hamlet rendered, "Je n'ai pas entendu une souris trotter." Our mouse could not trot without your assistance; with it, he performed his journey beautifully; though I did feel a horrid pang about my own imprudence, running into a dirty cottage on the road, full of the small-pox. Long live vaccination, however, and Dr. Jenner who first devised it.

To Miss Willoughby

Sunday, 18.

Here is a storm worthy of Mount's Bay; your billows must roar finely this morning. Bessy would

not trust me to church, I should have been blown down the hill, she says. So since Mr. Le Gris's blessing has helped bring me safe hither, I must not press it further, but sit pretty and put my leg upon a chair, instead of my foot. Was not it a horrid accident? and in the dead of the night [too]! Dr. Forbes will be very sorry, for poor H. L. P., always a blue, now a black and blue, lady, bruised, say you, from top to toe?—"My Lord, from head to foot."

The pet books, sent by waggon from Penzance (Pascoe's cart carried them), are not arrived yet. The ship things all came safe.

To Sir James Fellowes

March 24, 1821,
Sunday Morning.

Your letter only came last night.

My dear Sir James Fellowes, though a tardy correspondent, is always a kind one. True it is, that your sister has seduced me to dine with her on Tuesday next; and rejoyce in our friend Conway's success, which I hope to witness on Monday evening.

True it is, that I arrived at Clifton on the 12th March, escaping the stormy equinox, which must have shaken poor Penzance to the foundation. It is built upon the sand, so no wonder. True it is, that I hope to shew myself to you unimpaired, as to appearance; but my value will be lessened

because I have broken my shin. Is not that the case now and then with a quick goer? Sleeping in Russel Street, however, would not do. I have asked Miss Williams to dine with Mrs. Pennington and me at the Elephant and Castle, where I will set up my repose, and keep my l. e. g—my elegy—in good repair. Mrs. Pennington is quite poetical, always eloquent on that, and every subject. Since my arrival at Sion Hill,—for there I occupy a lodging till my house in the Crescent is ready,—two parcels directed by tying friends, have given me a mournful sensation: they are letters written by me to them in distant days, I know not how happy. You will have to look them over after my death, and I dare say they are better than those I write now. My intention, however, is not to be in haste: though Salusbury seemed to apprehend his journey would be long and expensive if I died at Penzance. So here is poor aunt at the embouchure of his favourite River Severn, and here he may come after (the 10th of July) to look after the demise and the legacy [leg I see]; but he must stay away till I have put my house in order.

HER CHARACTER OF MR. THRALE

As this is "Thraliana," I will now write Mr. *Thrale's* character in it. It is not because I am in good or ill-humour with him or he with me, for we are not capricious people, but have, I believe, the same opinion of each other at all places and times.

Mr. Thrale's person is manly, his countenance agreeable, his eyes steady and of the deepest blue; his look neither soft nor severe, neither sprightly nor gloomy, but thoughtful and intelligent; his address is neither caressive nor repulsive, but unaffectedly civil and decorous; and his manner more completely free from every kind of trick or particularity than I ever saw any person's. He is a man wholly, as I think, out of the power of mimickry. He loves money, and is diligent to obtain it; but he loves liberality too, and is willing enough both to give generously and to spend fashionably. His passions either are not strong, or else he keeps them under such command that they seldom disturb his tranquillity or his friends; and it must, I think, be something more than common which can affect him strongly, either with hope, fear, anger, love, or joy. His regard for his father's

memory is remarkably great, and he has been a most exemplary brother ; though, when the house of his favourite sister was on fire, and we were all alarmed with the account of it in the night, I well remember that he never rose, but bidding the servant who called us to go to her assistance, quietly turned about and slept to his usual hour. I must give another trait of his tranquillity on a different occasion. He had built great casks holding 1000 hogsheads each, and was much pleased with their profit and appearance. One day, however, he came down to Streatham as usual to dinner, and after hearing and talking of a hundred trifles, " but I forgot," says he, " to tell you how one of my great casks is burst, and all the beer run out."

Mr. Thrale's sobriety, and the decency of his conversation, being wholly free from all oaths, ribaldry and profaneness, make him a man exceedingly comfortable to live with ; while the easiness of his temper and slowness to take offence add greatly to his value as a domestic man. Yet I think his servants do not much love him, and I am not sure that his children have much affection for him ; low people almost all indeed agree to abhor him, as he has none of that officious and cordial manner which is universally required by them, nor any skill to dissemble his dislike of their coarseness. With regard to his wife, though little tender of her person, he is very partial to her understanding ; but he is obliging to nobody, and confers a favour less pleasingly than many a man refuses to confer

one. This appears to me to be as just a character as can be given of the man with whom I have now lived thirteen years ; and though he is extremely reserved and uncommunicative, yet one must know something of him after so long acquaintance. Johnson has a very great degree of kindness and esteem for him, and says if he would talk more, his manner would be very completely that of a perfect gentleman.

(Here follow Master Pepys' verses addressed to Thrale on his wedding-day, October, 1776.)

People have a strange propensity to making vows on trifling occasions, a trick one would not think of, but I once caught my husband at it, and have since then been suspicious that 'tis oftener done than believed. For example : Mr. Thrale and I were driving through E. Grinsted, and found the inn we used to put up at destroyed by fire. He expressed great uneasiness, and I still kept crying, " Why can we not go to the other inn ? 'tis a very good house ; here is no difficulty in the case." All this while Mr. Thrale grew violently impatient, endeavoured to bribe the post-boy to go on to the next post-town, &c., but in vain ; till, pressed by inquiries and solicitations he could no longer elude, he confessed to me that he had sworn an oath or made a vow, I forget which, seventeen years before, never to set his foot within those doors again, having had some fraud practised on him by a landlord who then kept the house, but had been dead long enough ago. When I heard this, all was

well; I desired him to sit in the chaise while the horses were changed, and walked into the house myself to get some refreshment the while.

In 1779, June, after his recovery from the first fit of paralysis, she writes :—

His head is as clear as ever; his spirits indeed are low, but they will mend; few people live in such a state of preparation for eternity, I think, as my dear master has done since I have been connected with him; regular in his public and private devotions, constant at the Sacrament, temperate in his appetites, moderate in his passions, —he has less to apprehend from a sudden summons than any man I have known who was young and gay, and high in health and fortune like him.

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